John Thompson's Easiest Piano Course

PART ONE

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FOREWORD

PURPOSE

This Course is designed to present the easiest possible approach to Piano Playing.

Part One is devoted to developing fluency in *reading by note*, **solving a problem that still seems to rate as "Musical Enemy, Number One" with most young students.**

The Work Sheets together with the Reading Aloud Exercises, appearing frequently, afford plenty of drill even for the backward student.

SCOPE

The range covered in Part One is purposely limited. Only five notes up and five notes down from Middle C are presented and Time Values do not go beyond Crotchets This makes it possible to include many examples in the form of Review Work and obviates the necessity of using supplementary material. In short, each book of the Course is complete in itself and contains its own Writing Exercises, Sight Reading Drills, Review Work and (in later books) Technical Studies.

ACCOMPANIMENTS

Accompaniments for teacher or parent are supplied with most of the examples. They have been carefully composed to make the little pieces sound as much as possible like fragments from larger compositions. Valuable in several ways, they not only make it possible to play in various keys, avoiding the deadly monotony of C major, but their use imposes strict Time and sharp Rhythm, especially when they are played with somewhat vigorous accents, thus helping the pupil to "feel" the rhythm from the very beginning.

GRADING

The Books in this Course do not represent any certain grade. They simply follow in proper sequence as Part One, Part Two, Part Three, etc. Nor are the Lessons measured page by page. Some pupils will master several pages per lesson—others only one. The Course progresses "Point by Point" rather than "Lesson by Lesson," and it is left to the teacher (who, after all, is the only one qualified) to decide how much or how little each pupil can absorb in one lesson.

PART TWO

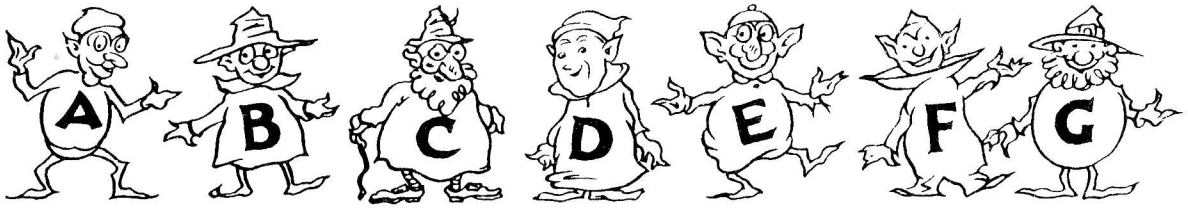
Part Two proceeds from the exact point reached at the end of Part One. New Notes, Time-Values and Rudiments are presented. Technique also begins in Part Two—first in the form of simple Finger Drills and later, more extended technical figures. Part Two remains in what is generally classified as Preparatory Grade.

The prime objective of the entire Course is to show *how easily, thoroughly, entertainingly* and *musically*—rather than *how fast*—each pupil can progress.

THE PIANO KEYBOARD

There are WHITE KEYS and BLACK KEYS on the Piano Keyboard.

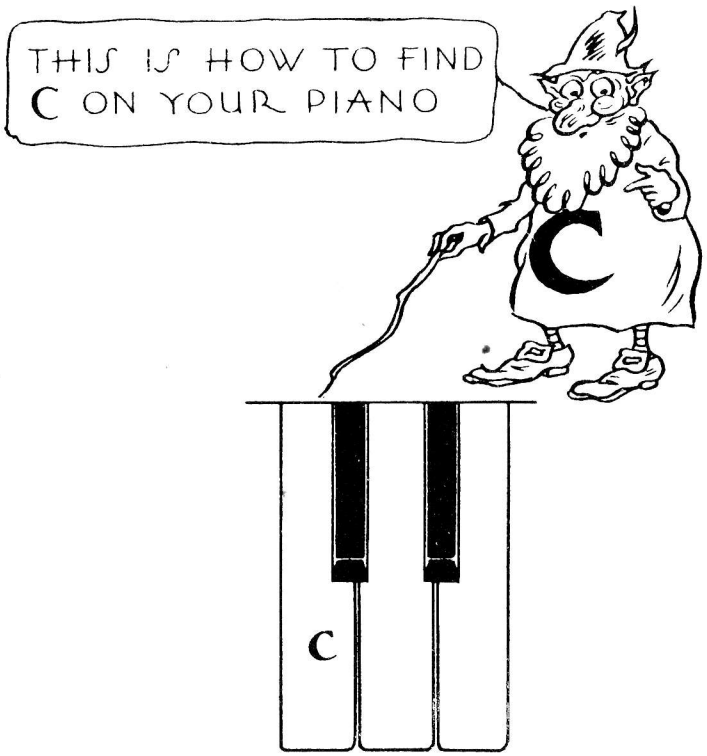
The WHITE KEYS are named



Recite the letters of the Musical Alphabet several times.

The BLACK KEYS are grouped in TWOS and THREES.

Touch all the groups of TWO BLACK KEYS on your piano.



C is found to the *left* of the TWO BLACK KEYS.

Letter all the C's you can find on the Keyboard Chart, next page.

Now, on your piano, PLAY all the C's you can find—using the thumb.

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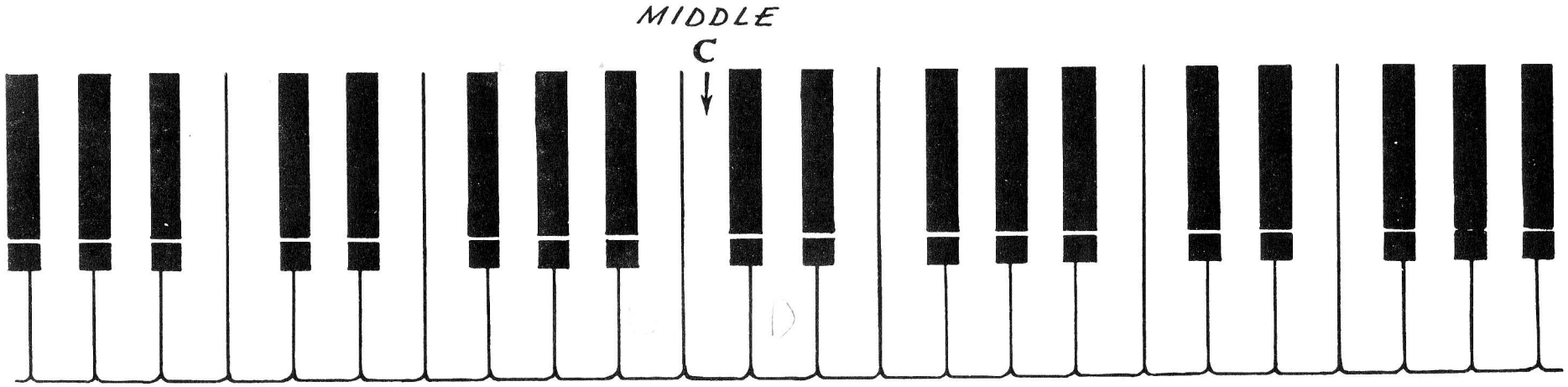
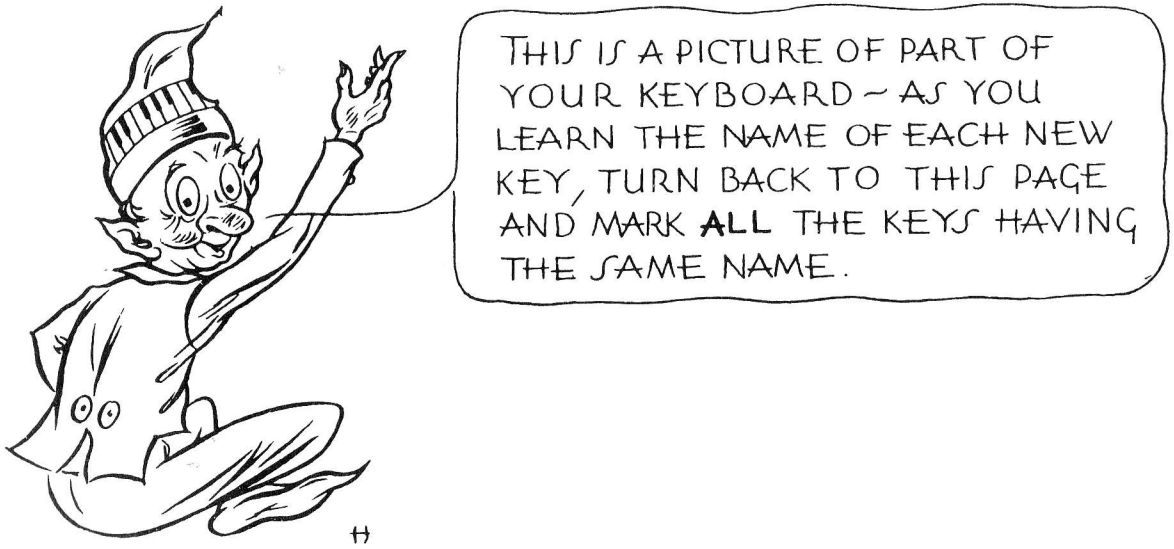
KEYBOARD CHART

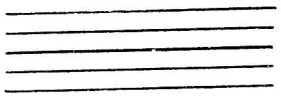
(A section of the Keyboard)





MIDDLE C ON THE MUSIC

The Staff



Music is written on the LINES and SPACES of the STAFF.

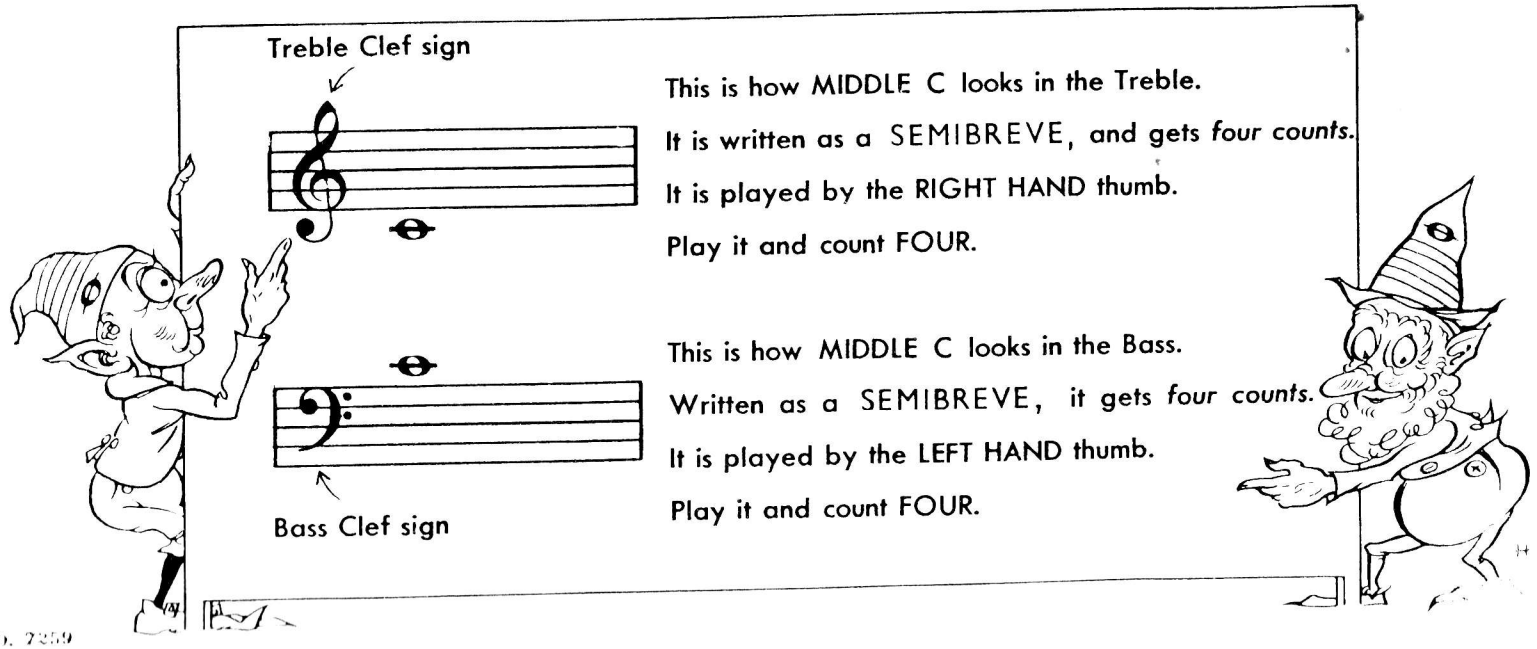
The NOTES on the Music tell us which KEYS to play.

There are different kinds of Notes, but first we shall learn the SEMIBREVE.

A SEMIBREVE looks like this, 𝅝

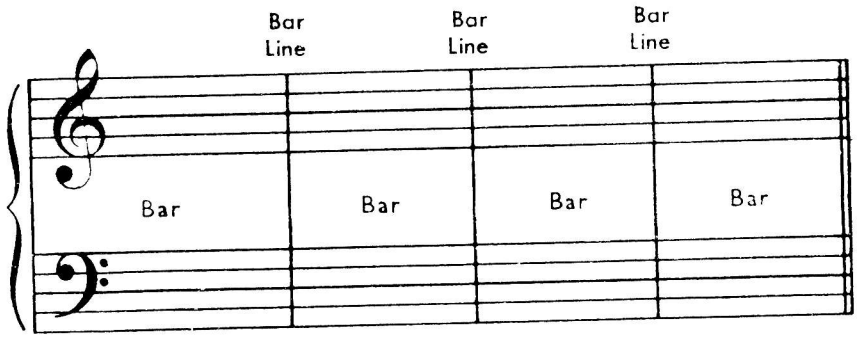
It is held for FOUR COUNTS.

Clef Signs



This is how MIDDLE C looks in the Treble.
It is written as a SEMIBREVE, and gets *four counts.*
It is played by the RIGHT HAND thumb.
Play it and count FOUR.

This is how MIDDLE C looks in the Bass.
Written as a SEMIBREVE, it gets *four counts.*
It is played by the LEFT HAND thumb.
Play it and count FOUR.

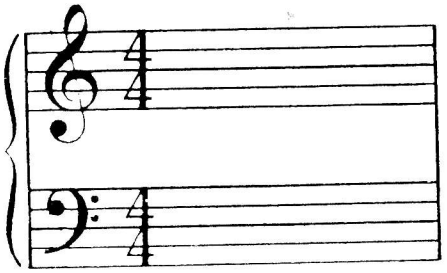


The figures after the Clef Signs tell us how to count.

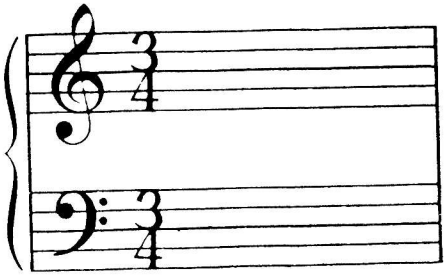
In this book we need only read the *top* figure.

It shows how many counts to each bar.

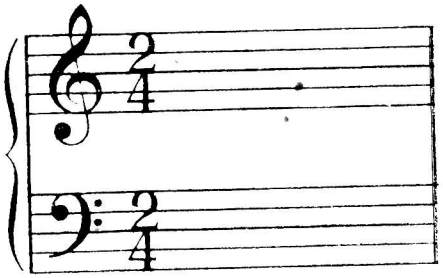
Count 4 to each bar



Count 3 to each bar



Count 2 to each bar



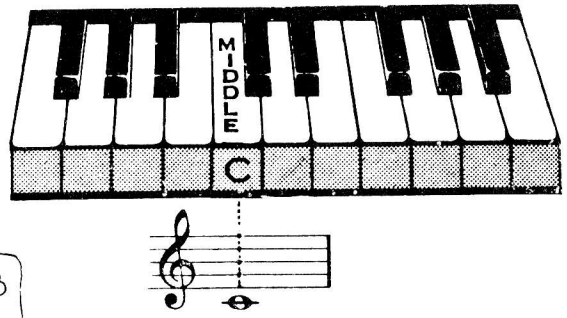
Left Hand

Each finger has a number. The thumbs are number 1.

Right Hand

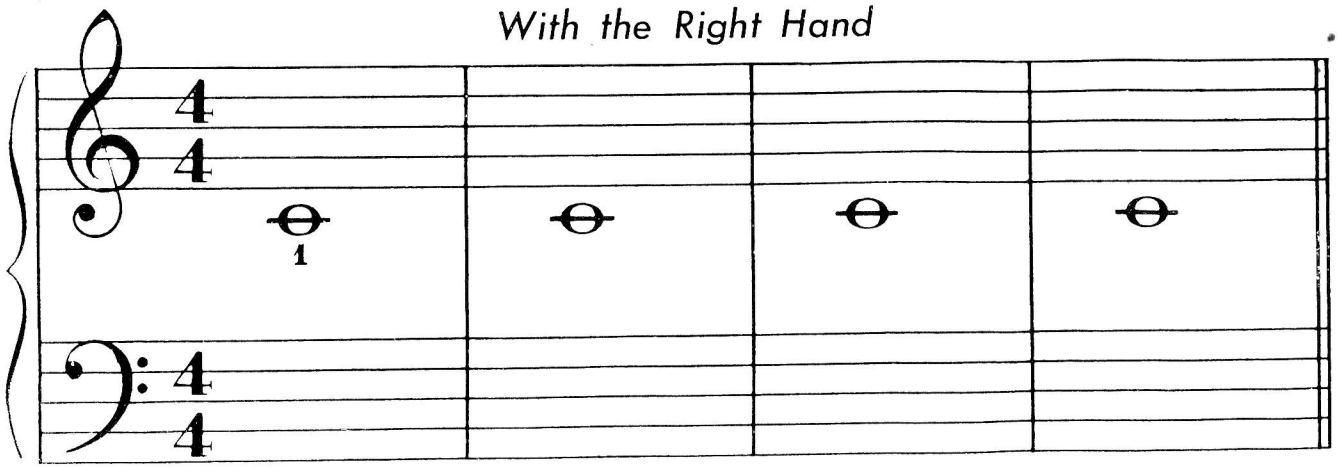
Middle C as a Semibreve

In the Treble



Let's Play

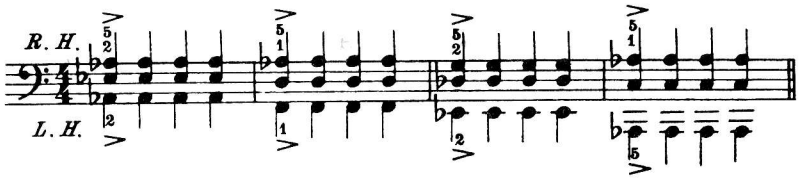
With the Right Hand

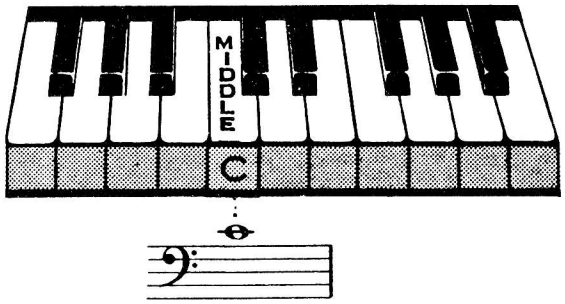


Middle C as a Semibreve

In the Bass

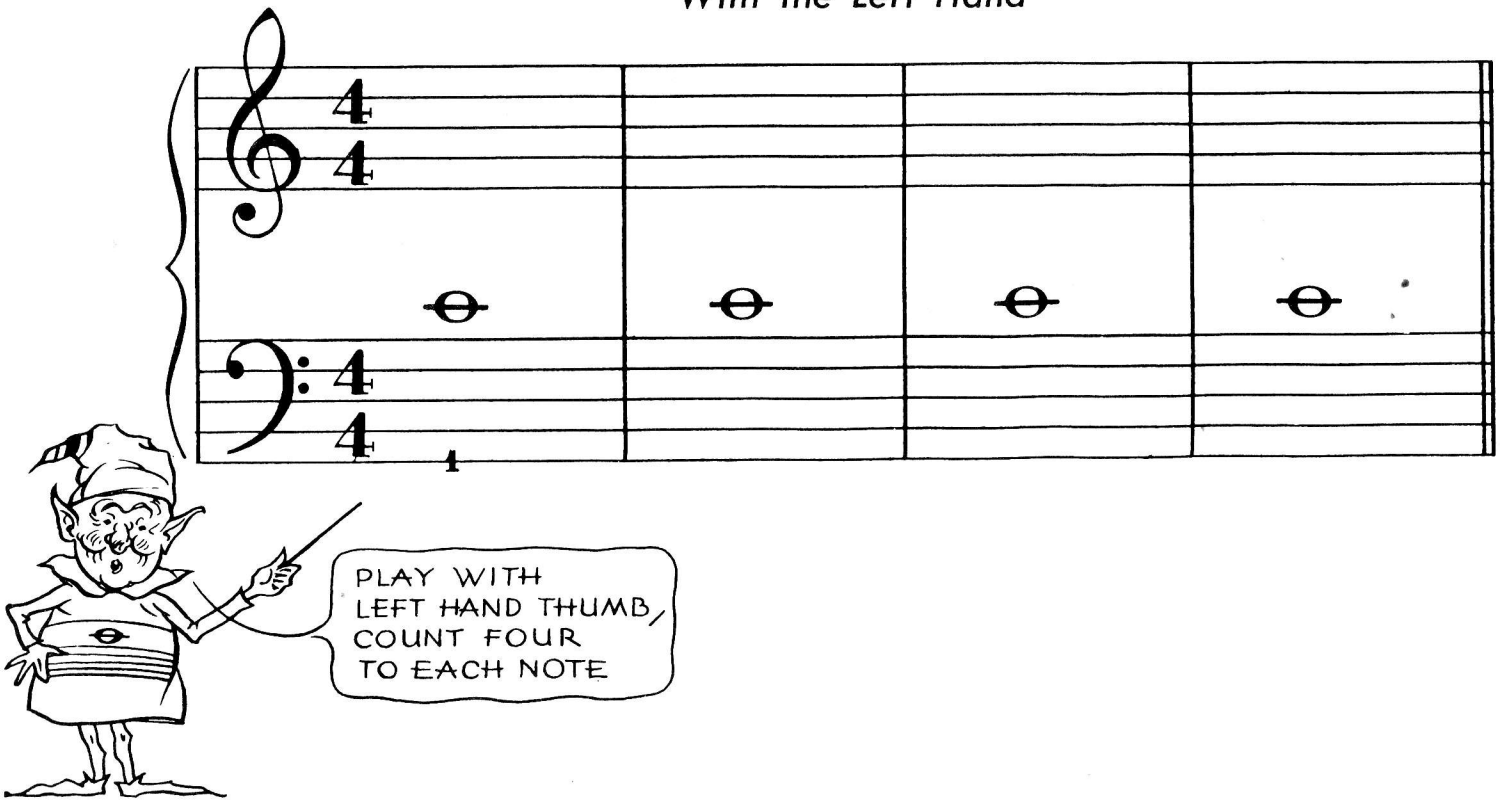
Accompaniment





Let's Play

With the Left Hand



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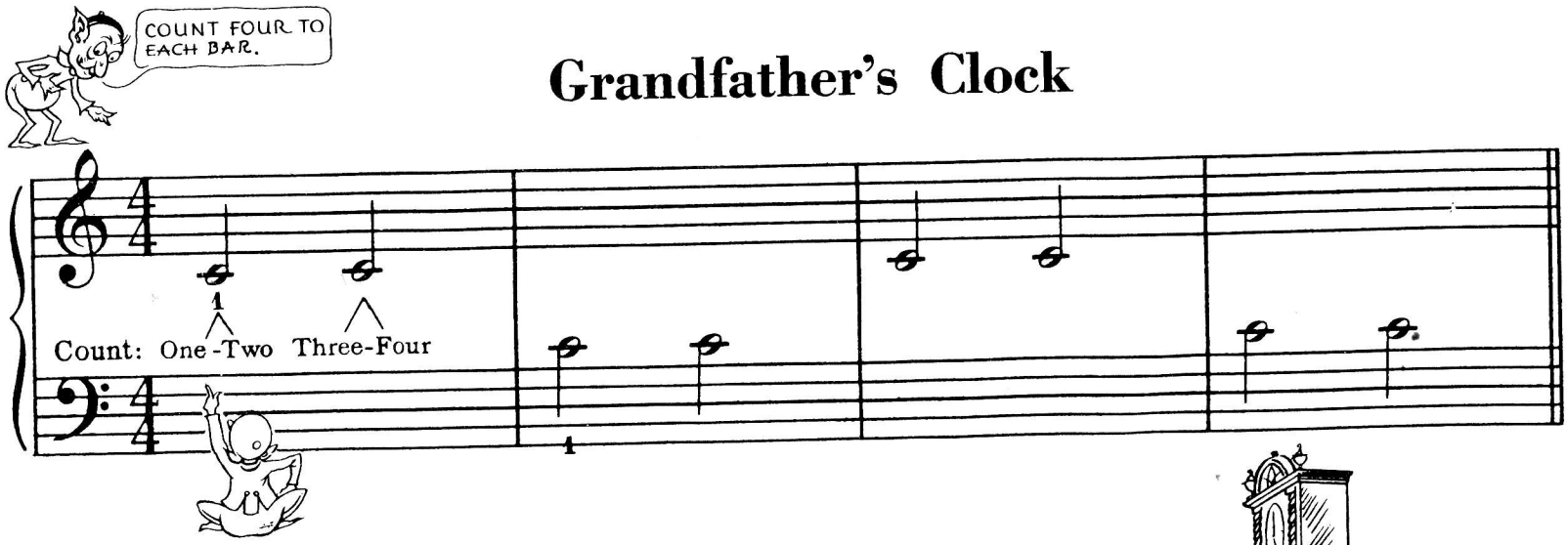
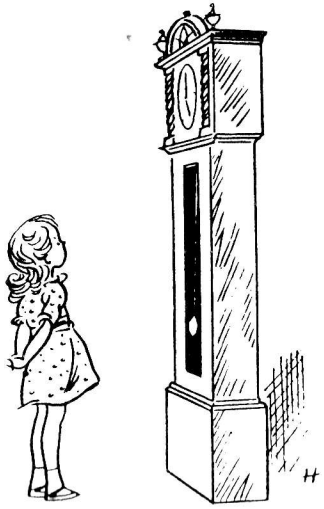
Middle C in Minims

When a Note has an open head and a stem, like this, (𝅗𝅥 or 𝅗𝅥) it is called a MINIM and gets *two counts*.

Play the following, counting TWO to each note—"ONE, TWO" to the first note and "THREE, FOUR" to the second note of each bar.

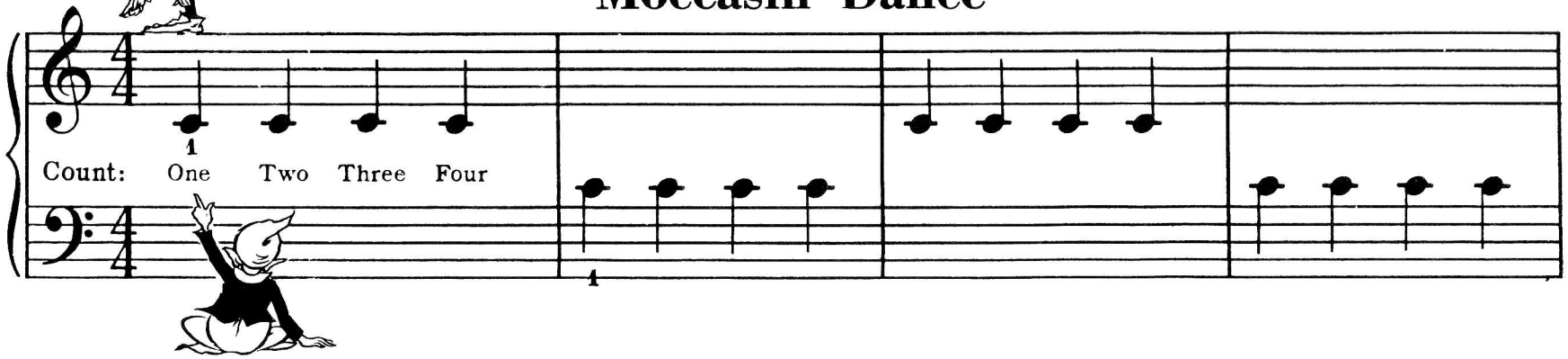


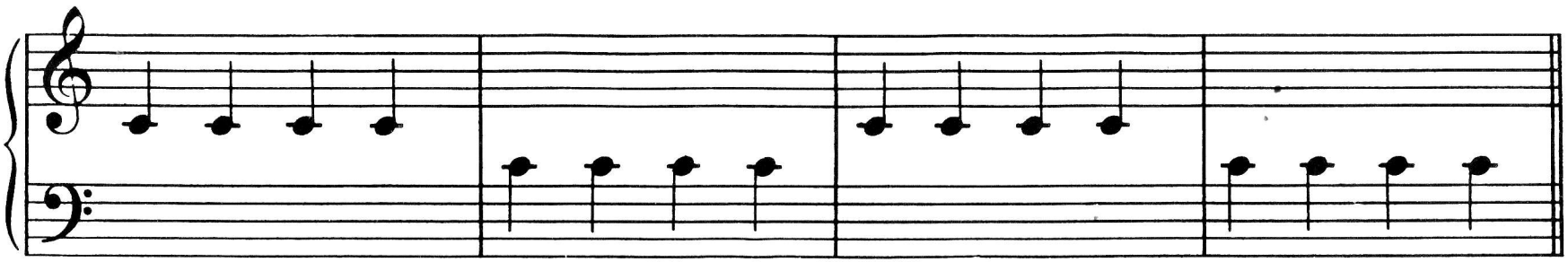


Middle C in Crotchets

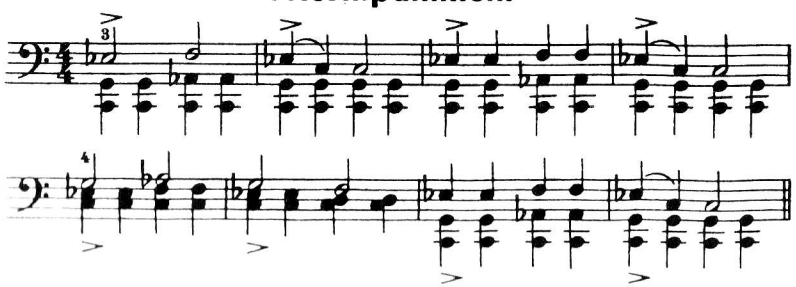
A CROTCHET looks like this (♩ or ♩) and gets *one count.*

Moccasin Dance



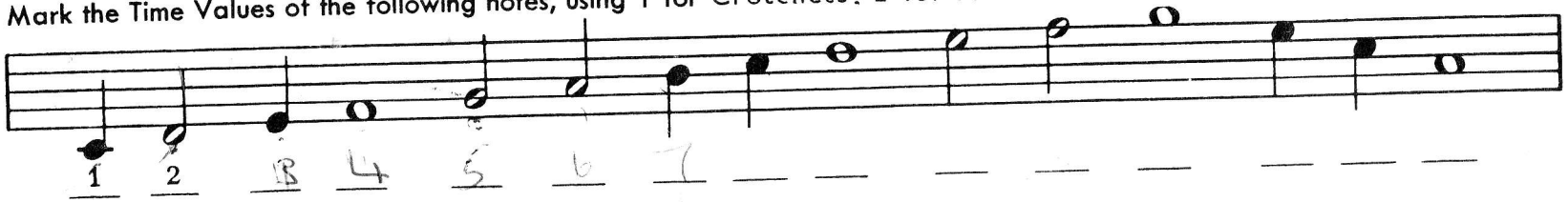


Accompaniment



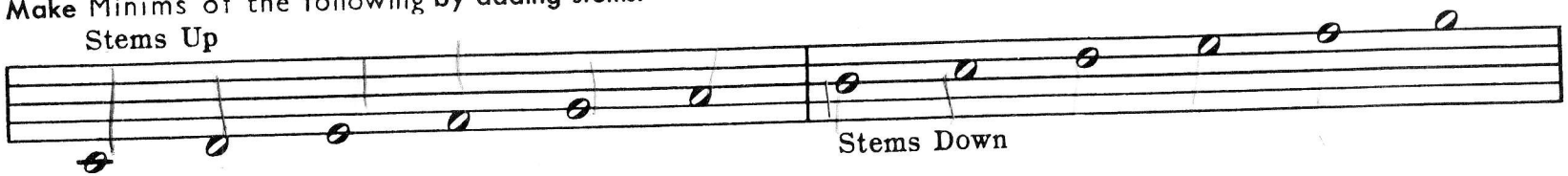
Mark the Time Values of the following notes, using 1 for Crotchets, 2 for Minims and 4 for Semibreves.

1



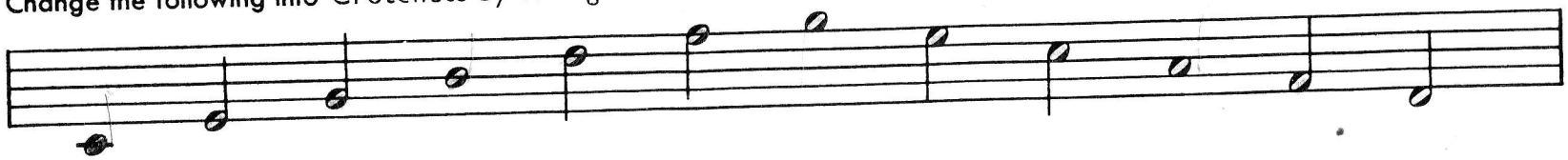
Make Minims of the following by adding stems.

2



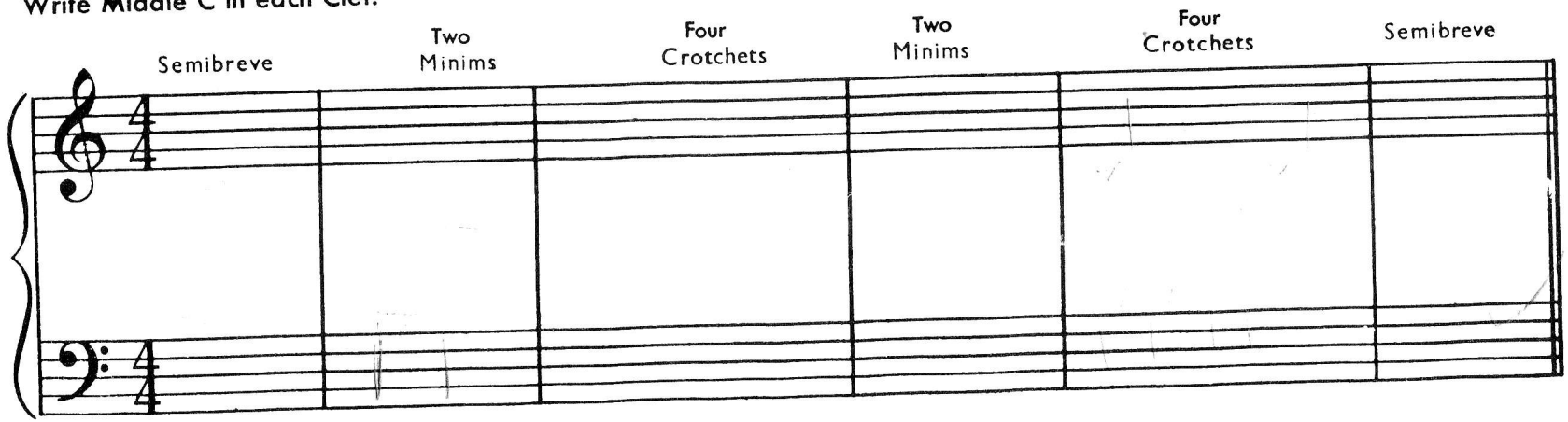
Change the following into Crotchets by filling in the heads and adding stems when necessary.

3

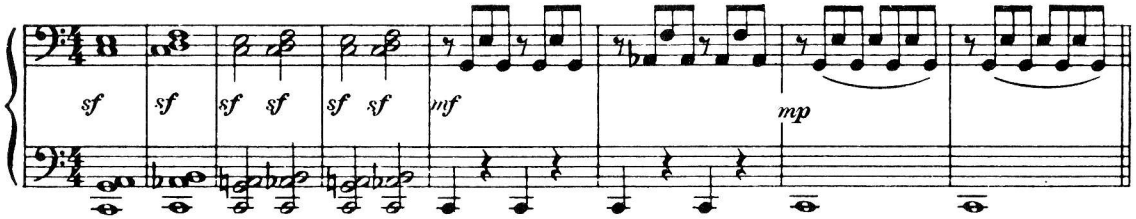


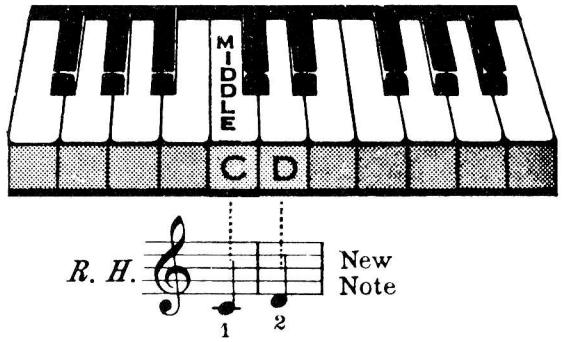
Write Middle C in each Clef.

4

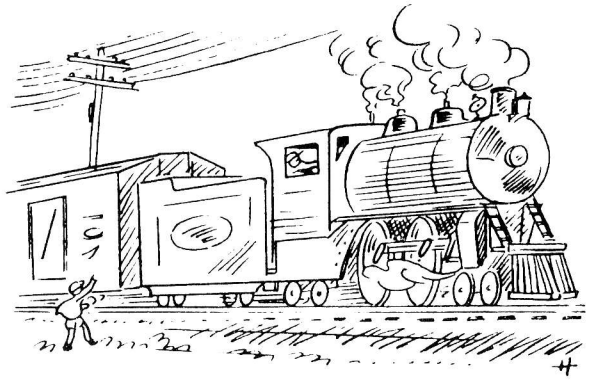


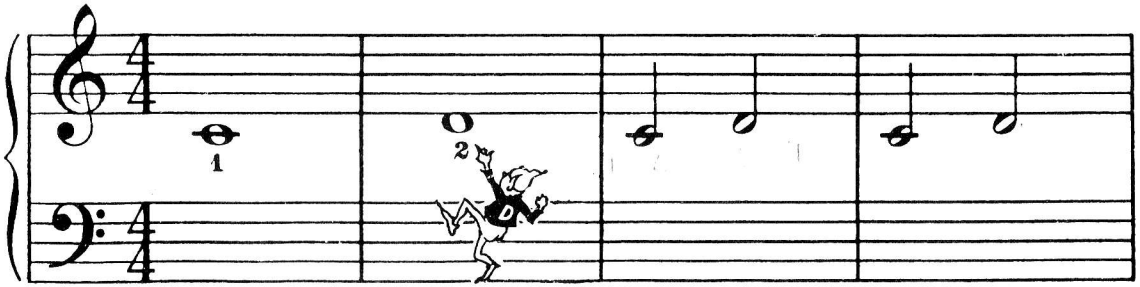
Accompaniment

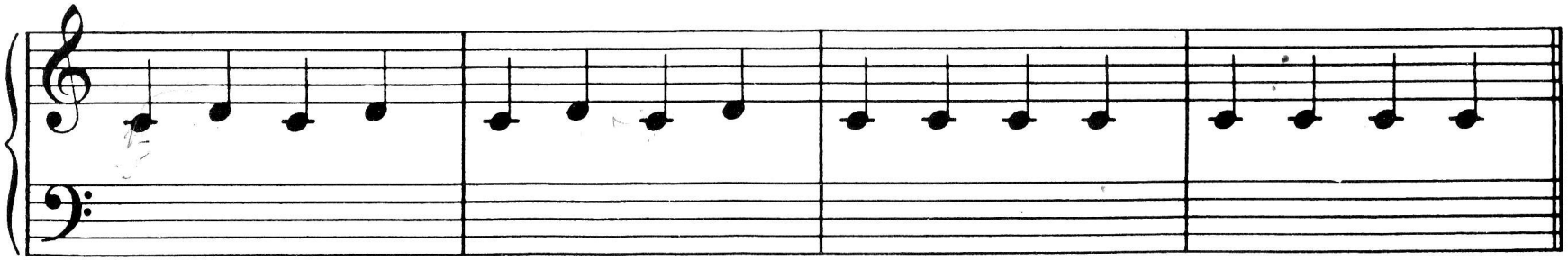




The Train

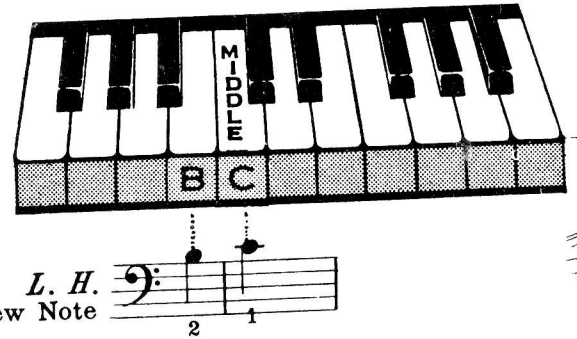


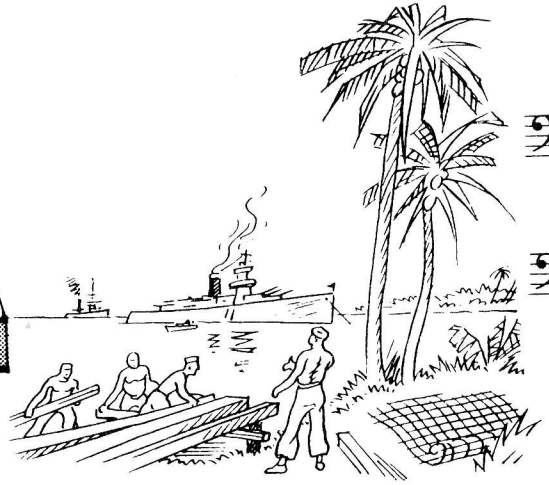




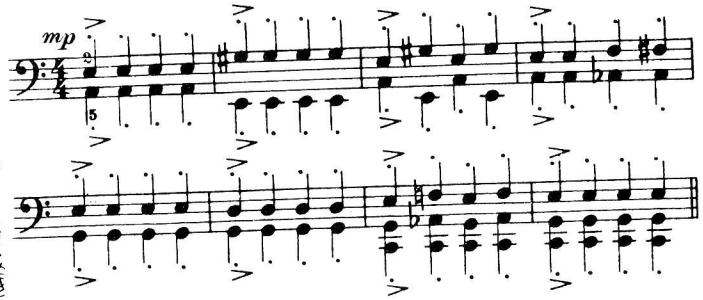
Note to Teacher

From this point on, be sure to stress the importance of accenting the first count of each bar.

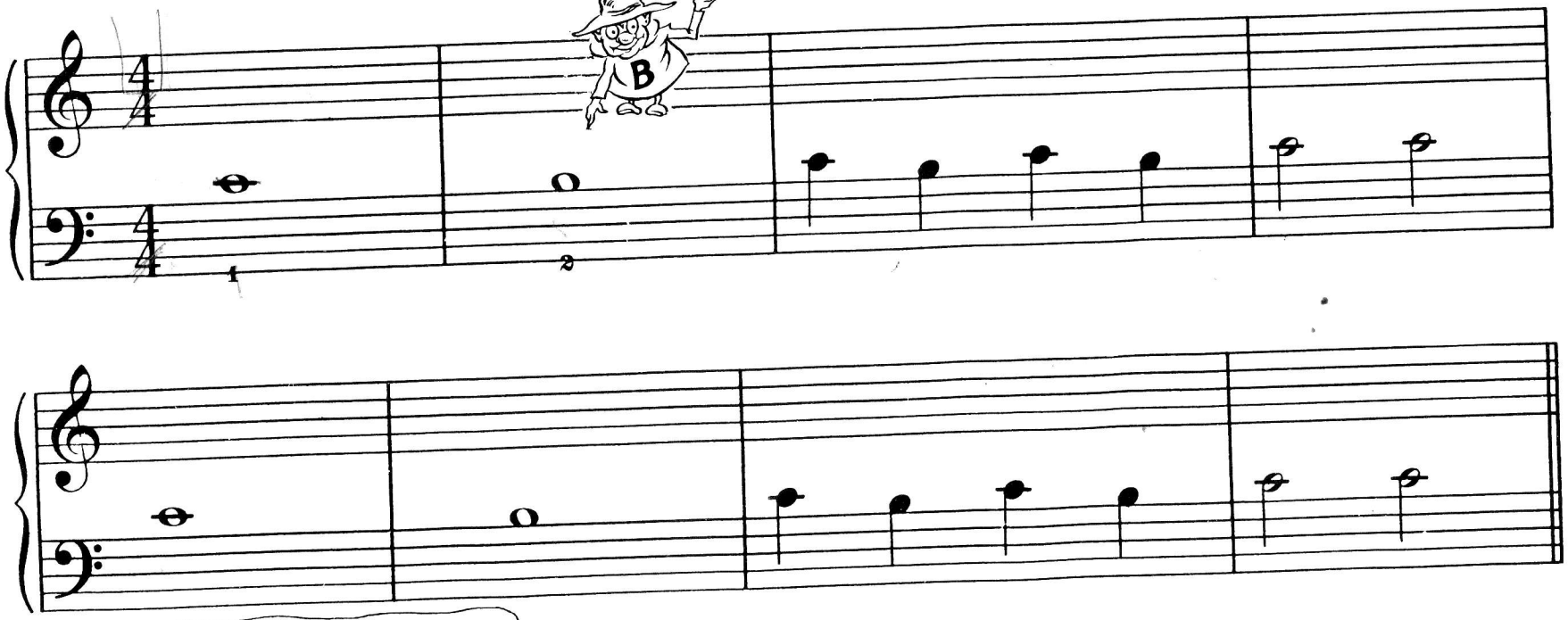


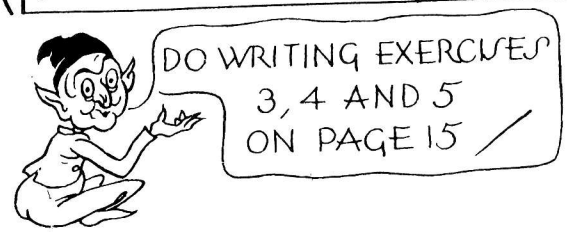


Accompaniment

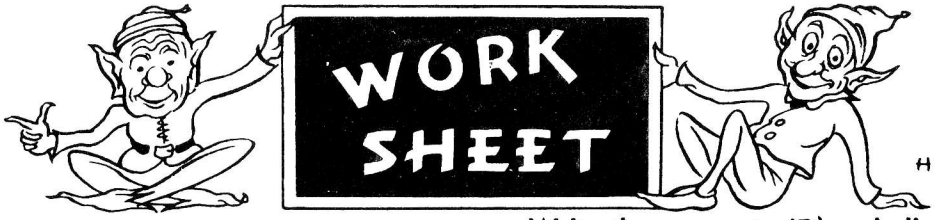


The Seabées



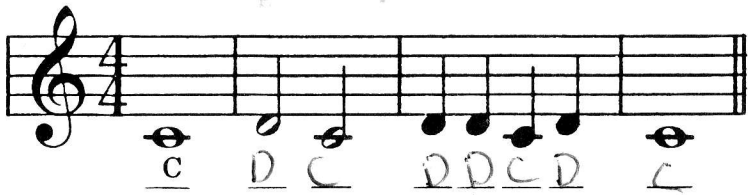


SEABÉES: A descriptive word-play on the U.S. Navy's CONSTRUCTION BATTALION who are busy as bees when tackling a difficult task.



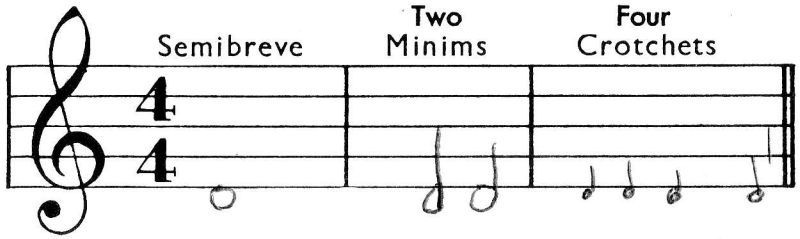
Write the letter names under the notes.

1



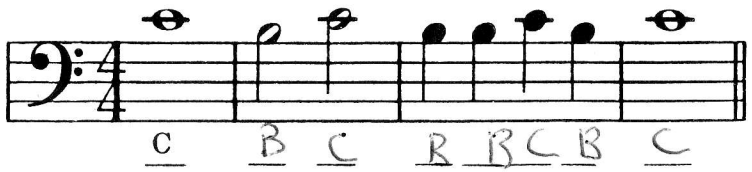
Write the new note (D) as indicated.

2



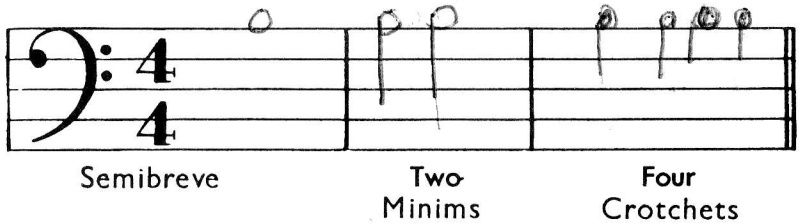
Write the letter names under the notes.

3



Write the new note (B) as indicated.

4

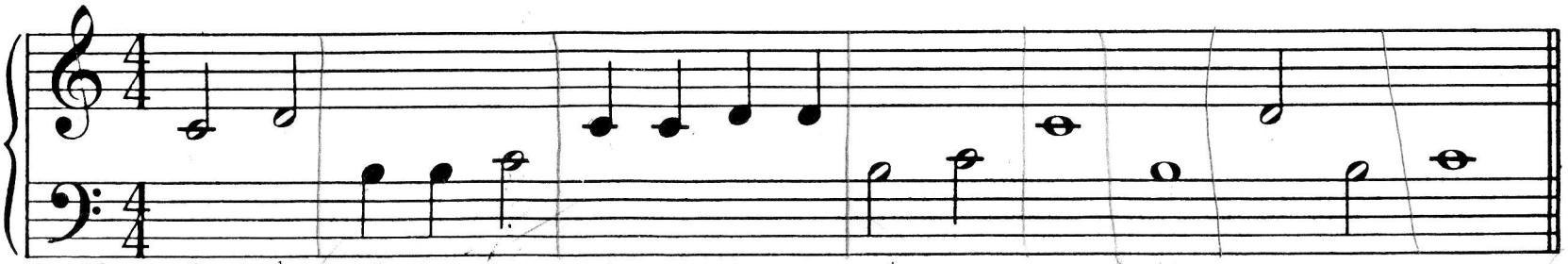


In the following exercise, first draw the Bar Lines where they belong. (note Time Signature).

Next write the letter names of the notes.

Finally, mark the Time Values—using 1 for a Crotchet, 2 for a Minim and 4 for a Semibreve.

5



Letter Names C _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _

Time Values 2

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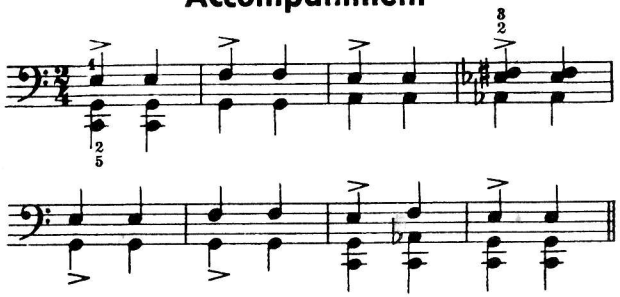
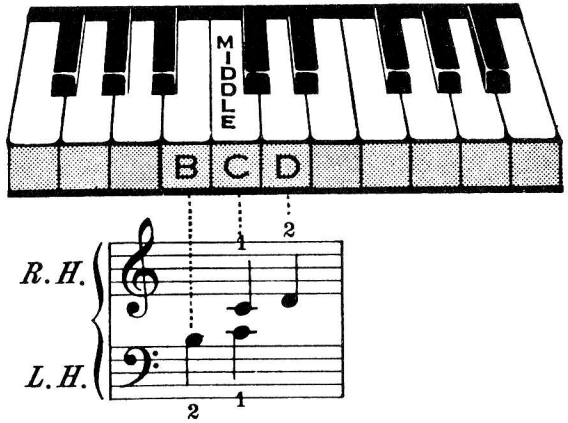
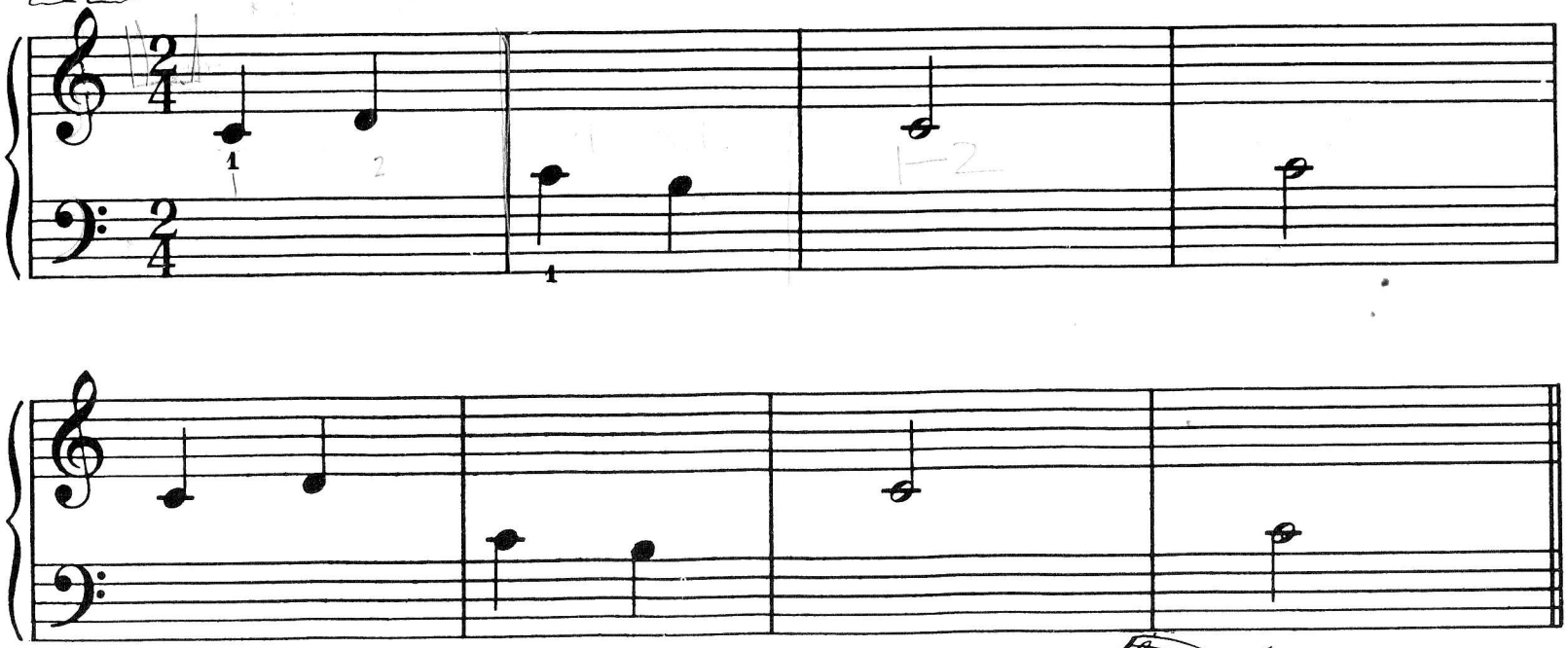
TWO-FOUR

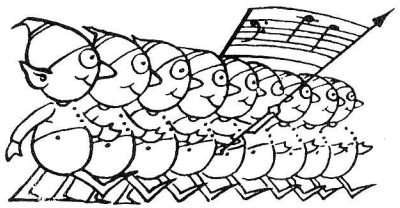
Accompaniment

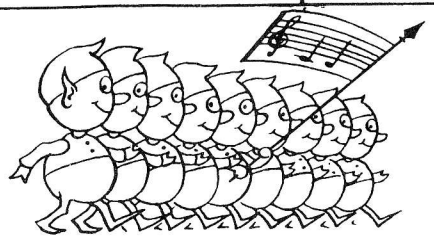




March of the Gnomes







semibreves = o = 4 counts.
minims = d = 2 counts.

crotchets = ♩ = 1 count.

dotted minim d. = 3 counts.

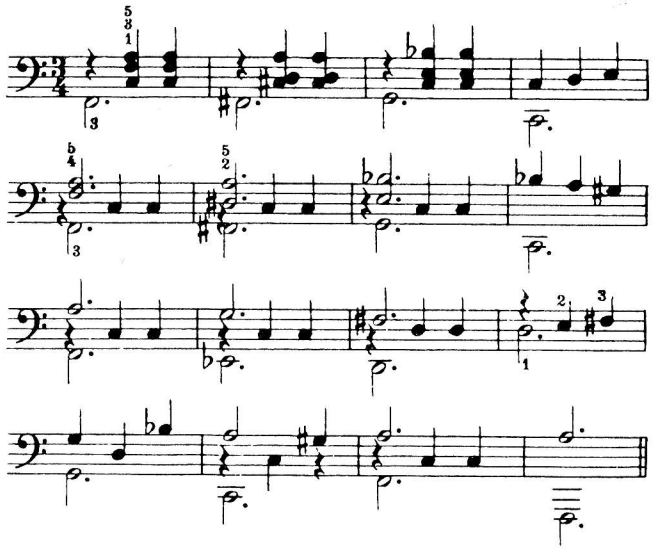
THREE-FOUR and The Dotted Minim

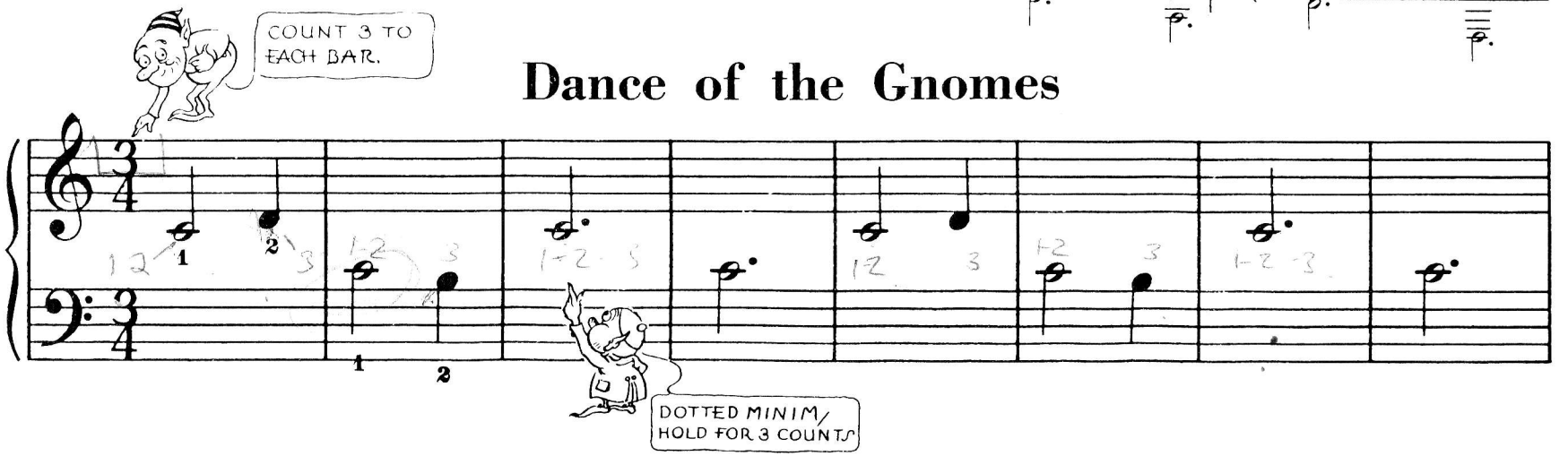
19/5
Do this one
Learn carefully
what is written at the top.

The dotted minim.

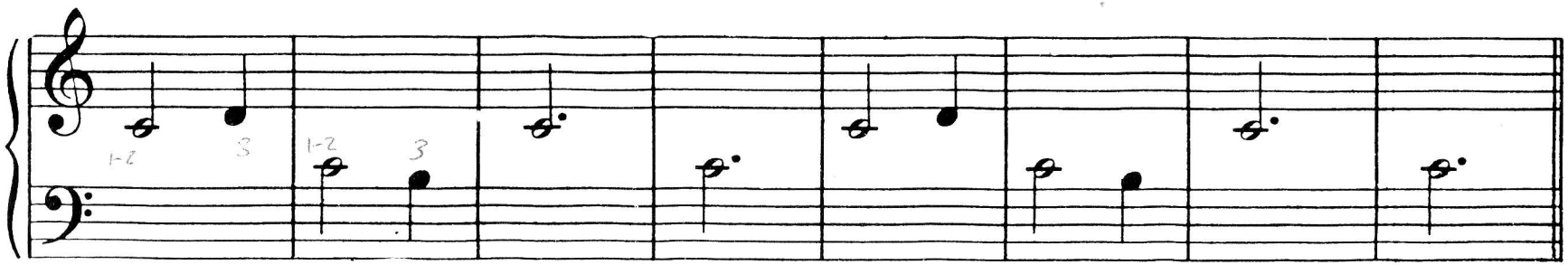
looks like this (𝅗𝅥. or 𝅗𝅥.)

and is held for 3 counts.





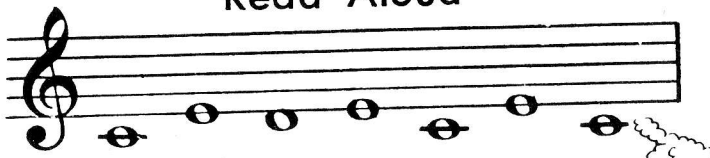
Dance of the Gnomes

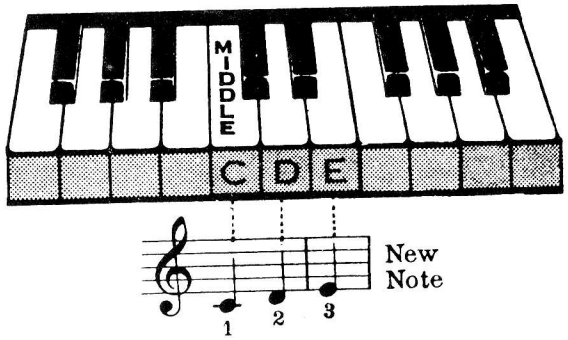


See the importance of correct counting? These are the same notes you played in "March of the Gnomes" but they make a new piece when you count 3 to each bar.

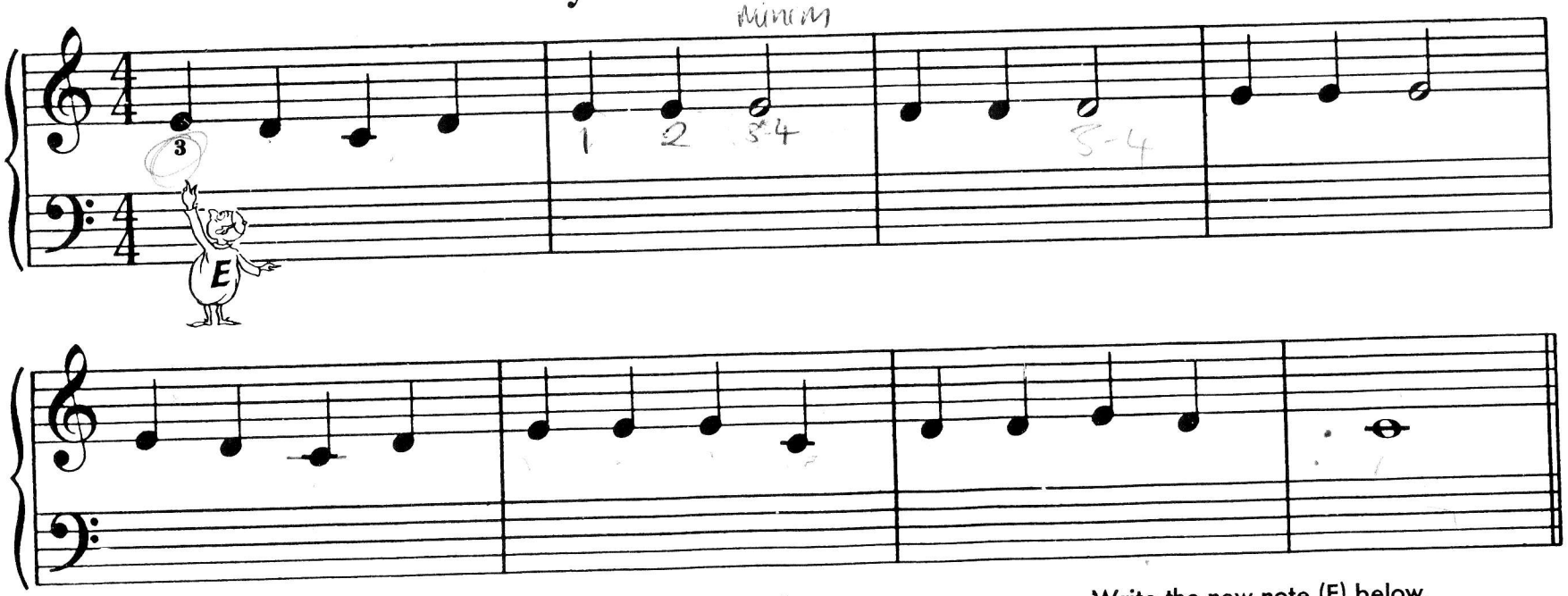
26th May: Do this one now.

Read Aloud





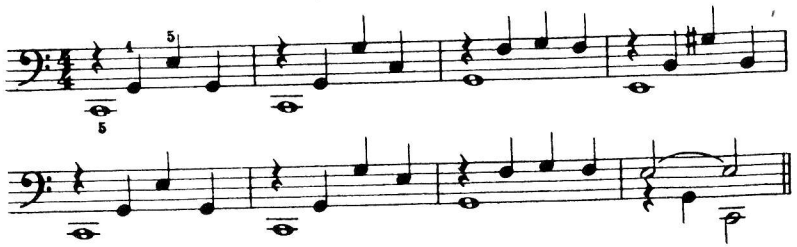
Mary Had a Little Lamb

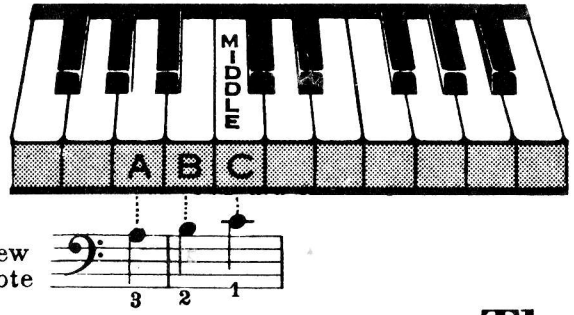


Write the new note (E) below.

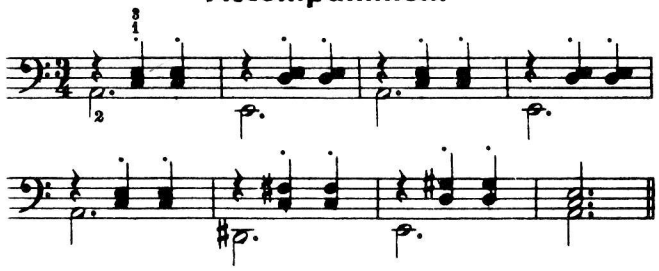
Semibreve	Minim	Dotted Minim	Crotchet

Accompaniment

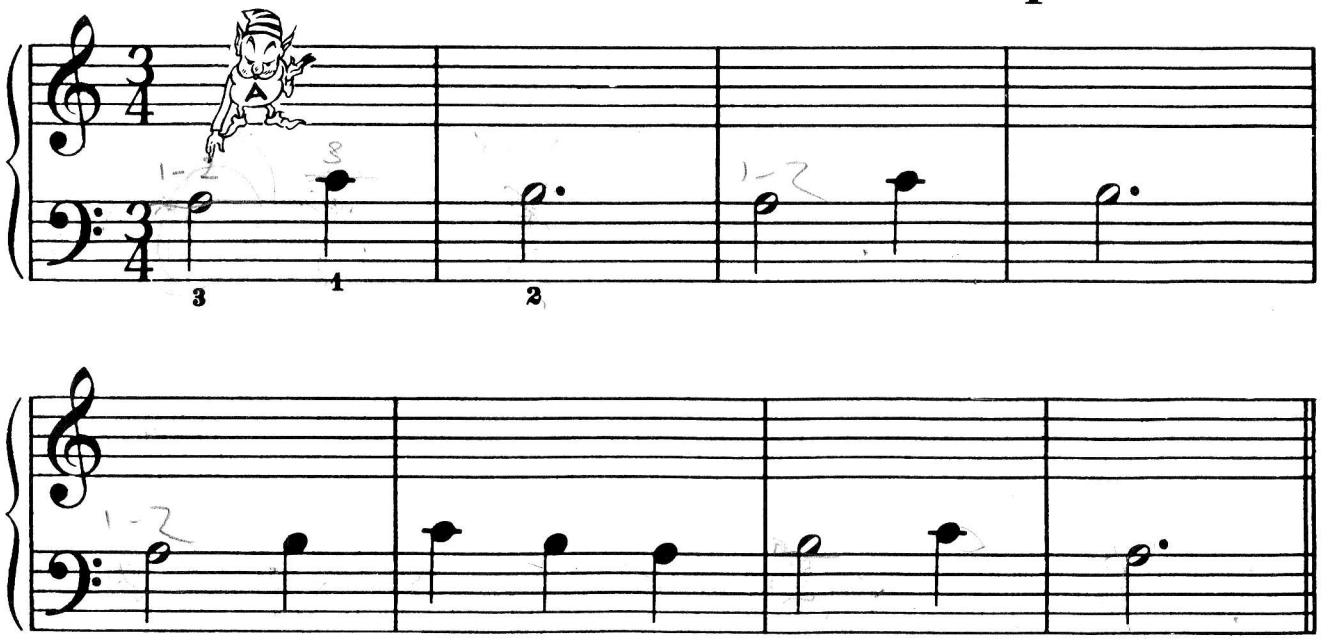


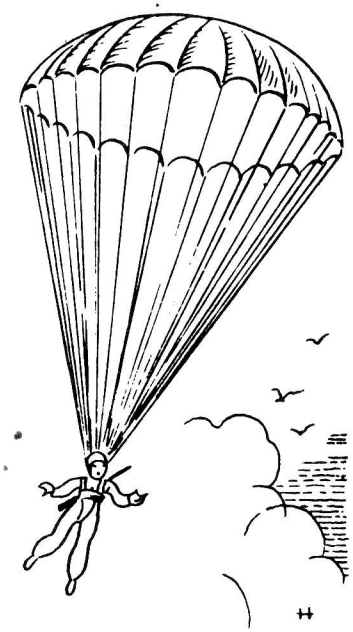


Accompaniment

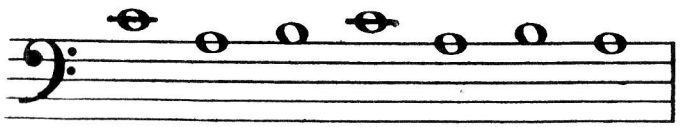


The Paratrooper

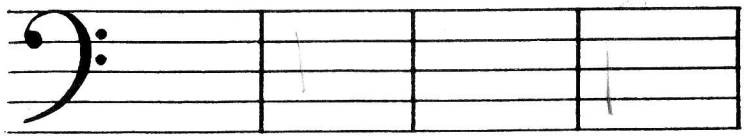




Read Aloud

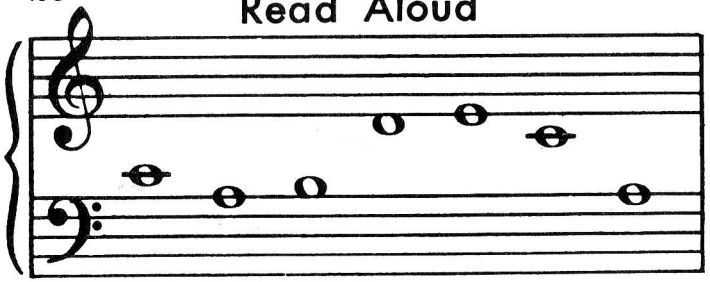


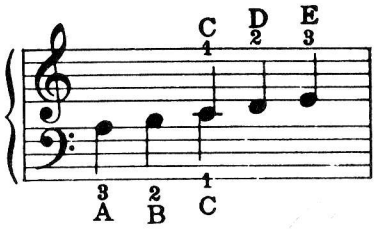
Write the new note (A) below.



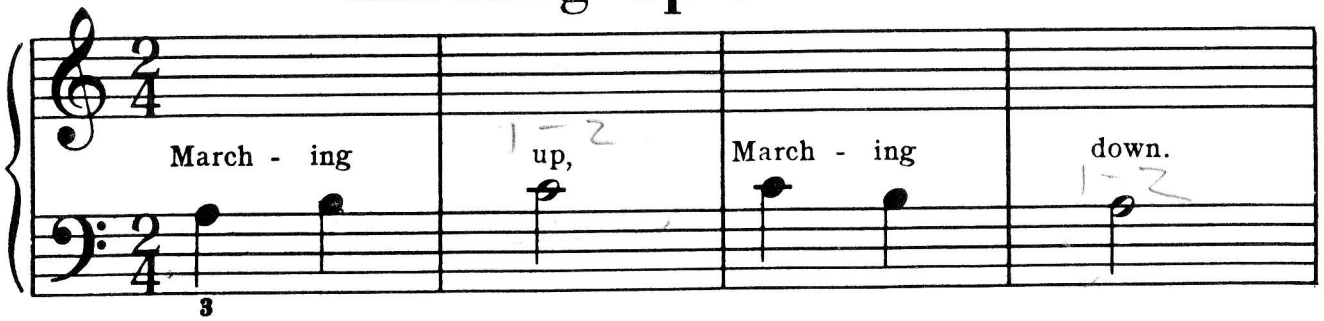
Semibreve | Minim | Dotted Minim | Crotchet

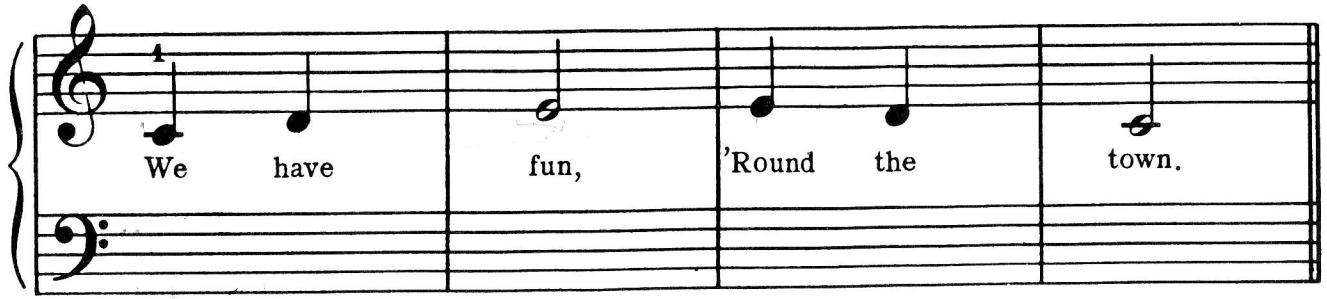
Read Aloud



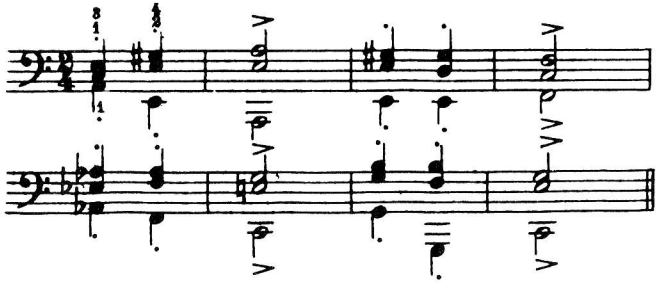


Marching Up and Down

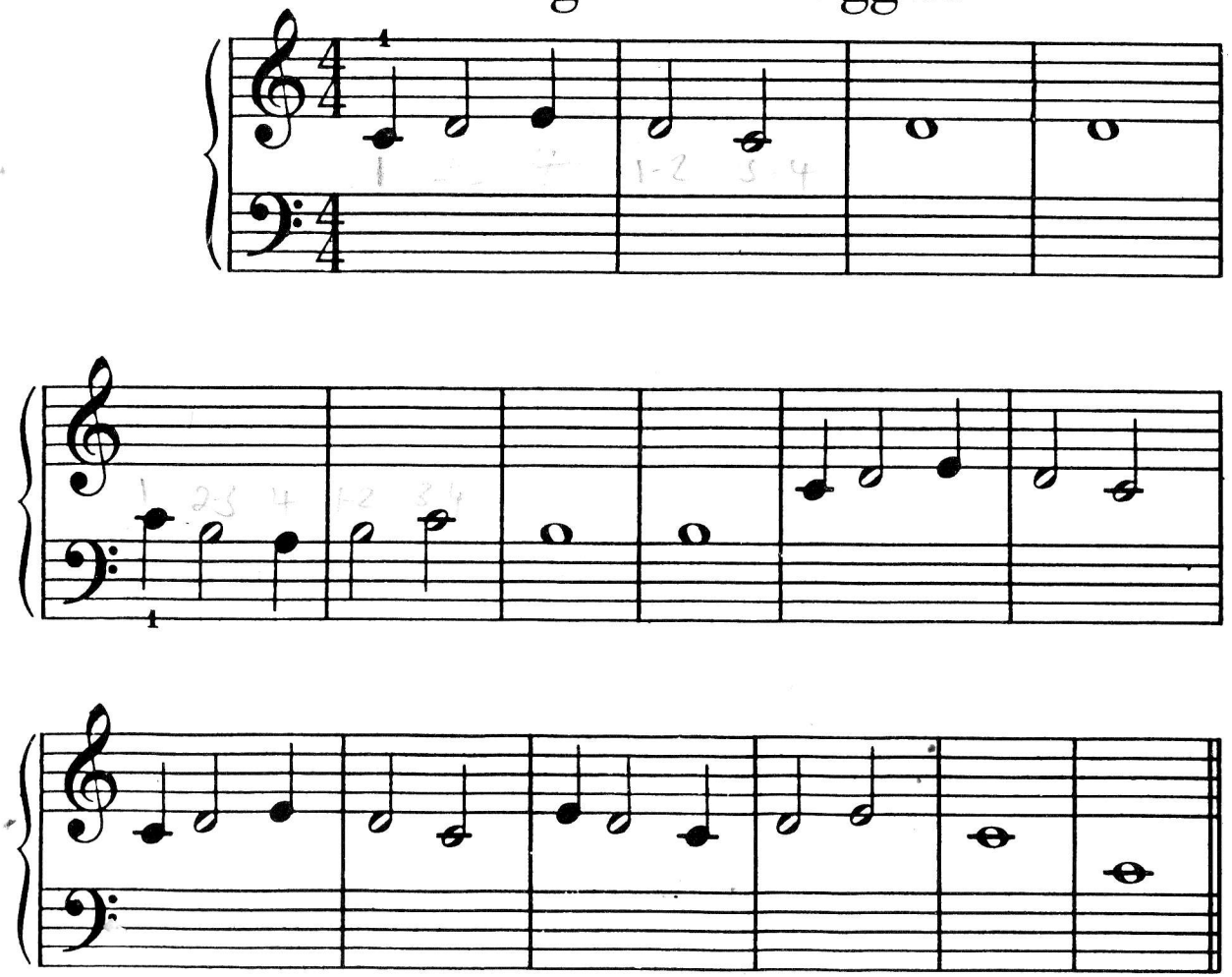




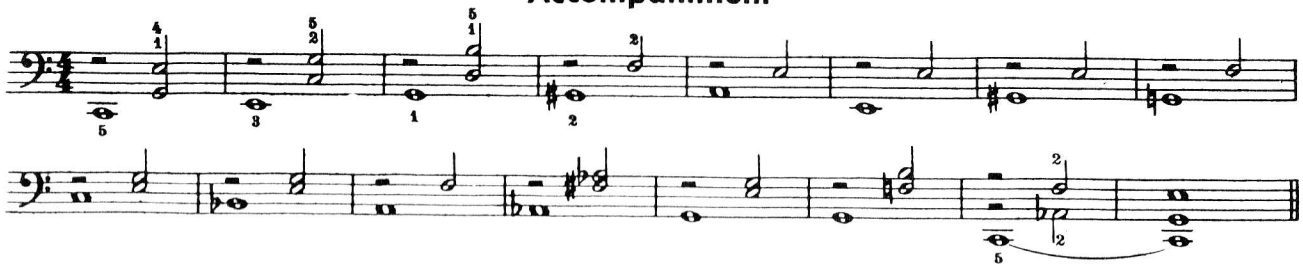
Accompaniment



Rag-Time Raggles



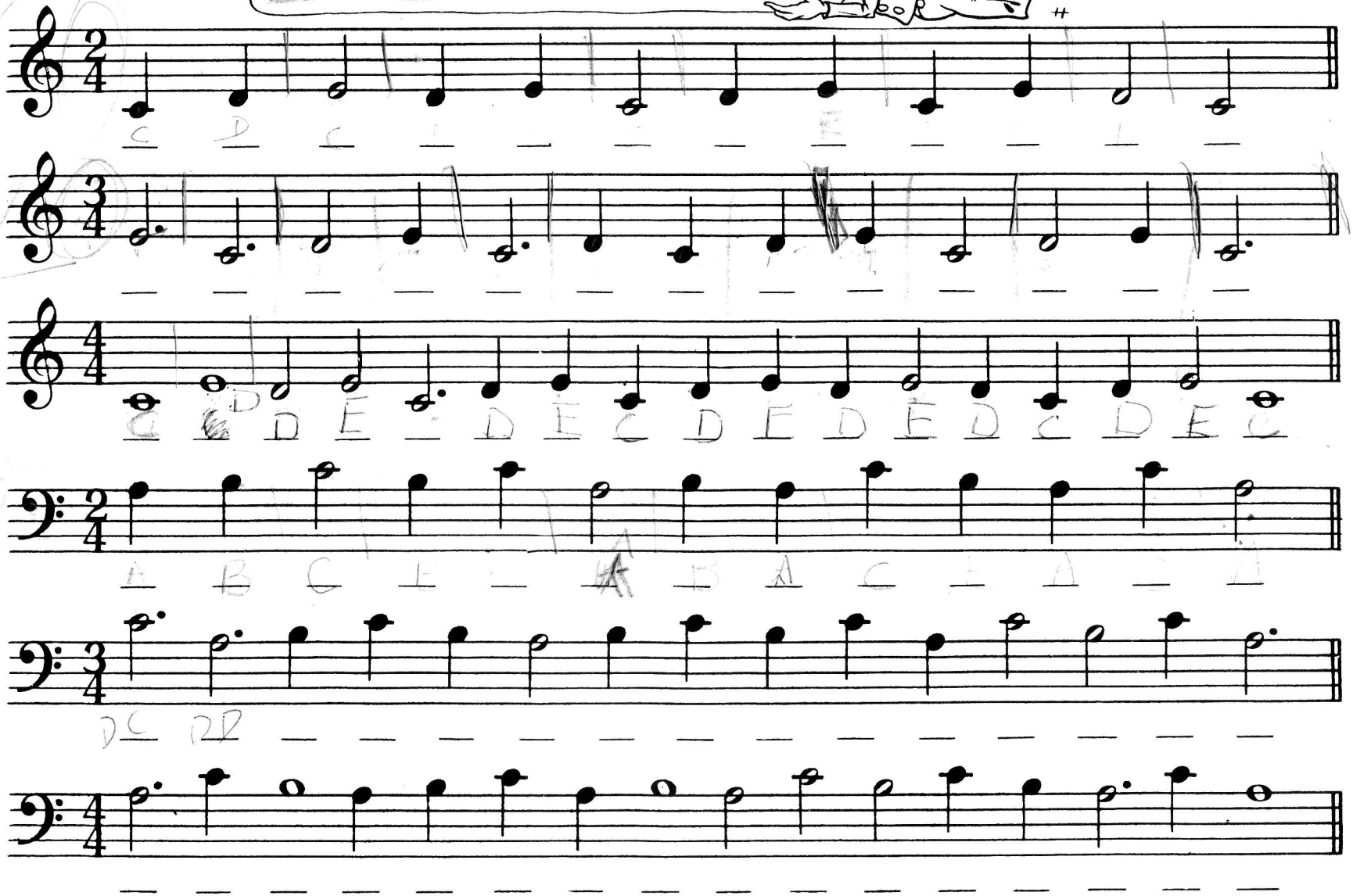
Accompaniment

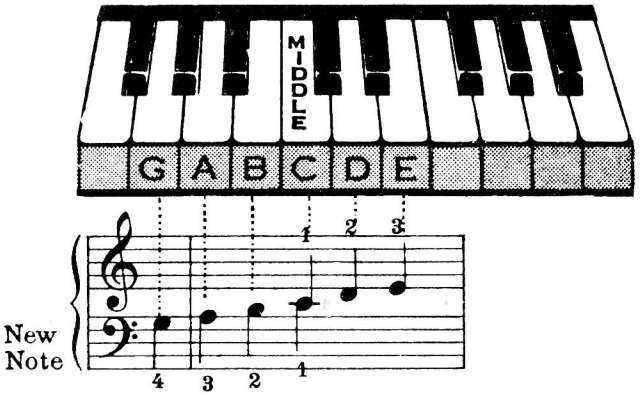


Work Sheet

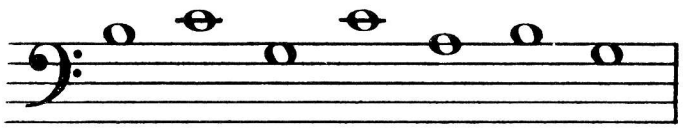
FIRST, LOOK AT THE TIME SIGNATURES
NEXT, DRAW BAR LINES IN THEIR
PROPER PLACES – THEN, WRITE THE
LETTER-NAMES UNDER THE NOTES

semibreves

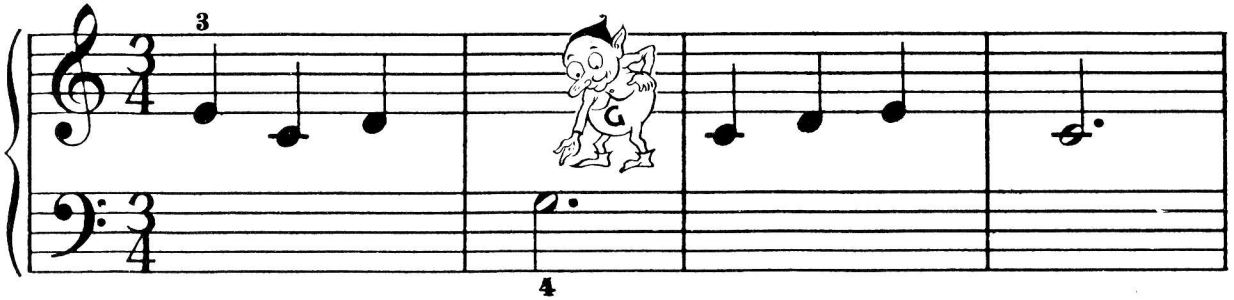


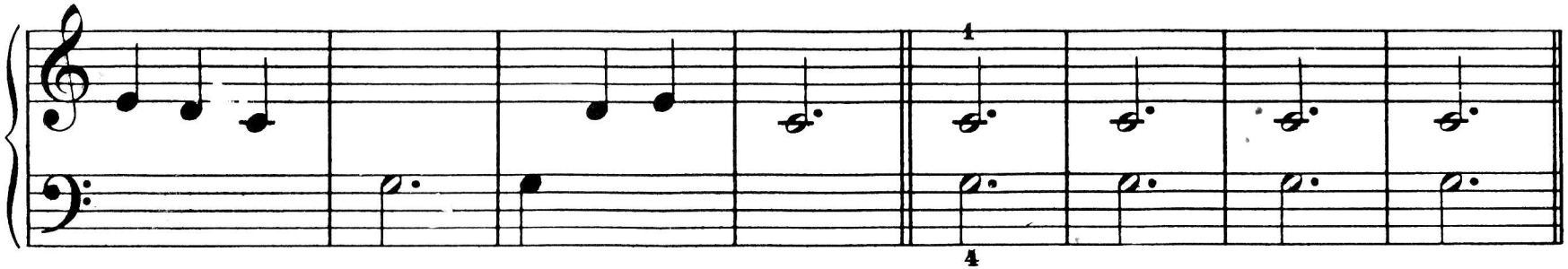


Read Aloud

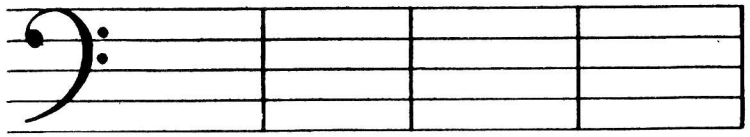


The Chimes



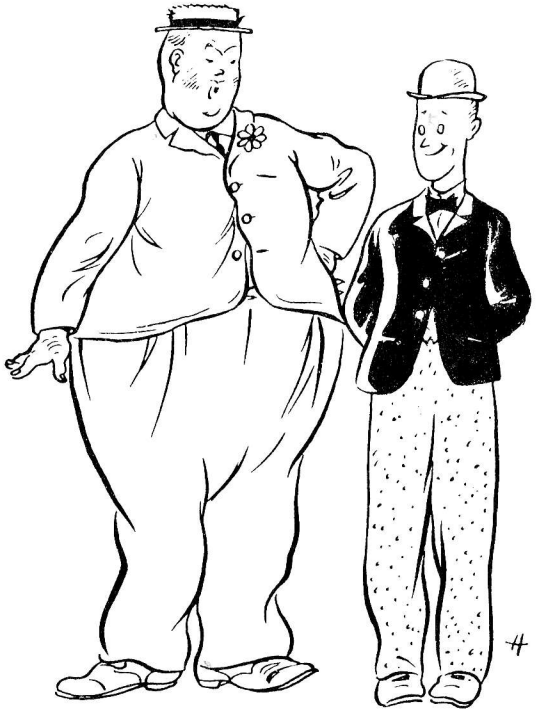


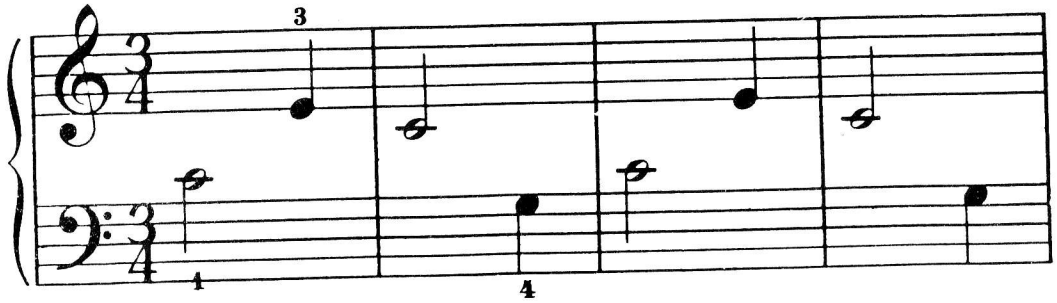
Write the new note (G) below.

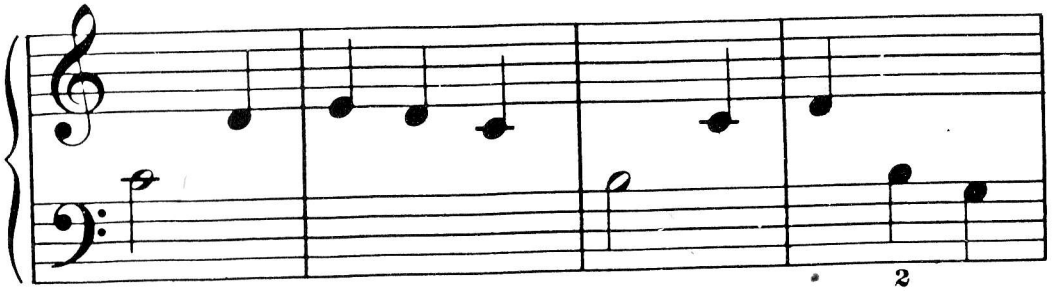


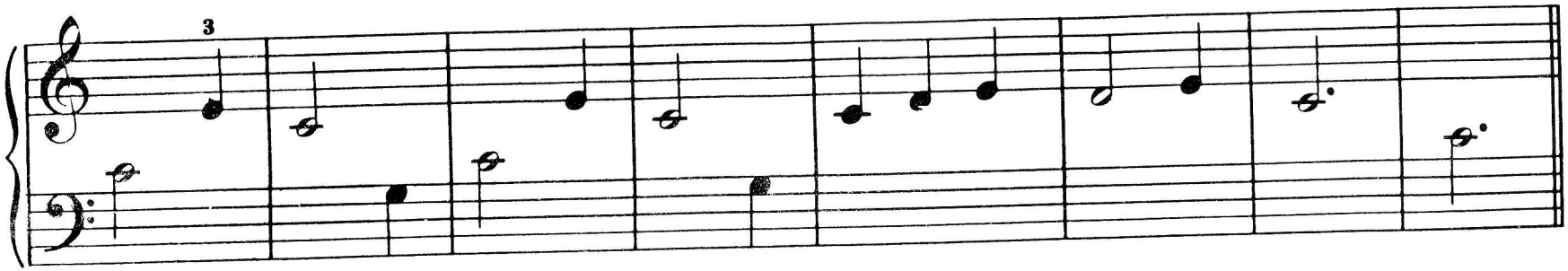
Semibreve | Minim | Dotted Minim | Crotchet

Funny Faces

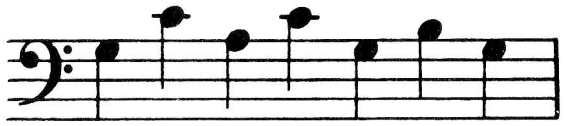




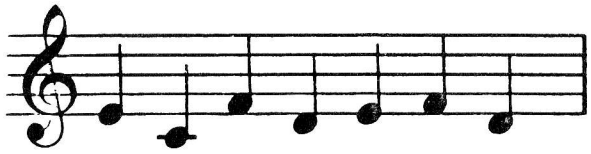




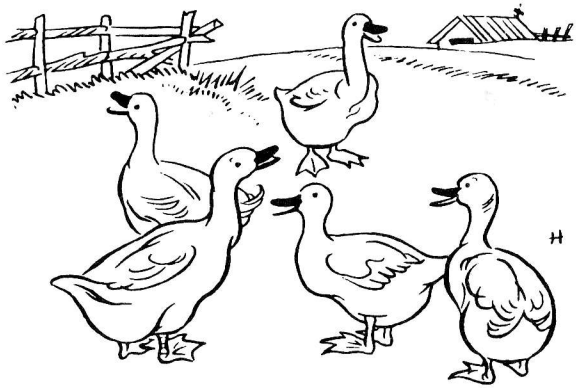
Read Aloud



Read Aloud



Old MacDonald



Old Mac-Don-ald had a farm, Ee-eye, Ee-eye, oh! And

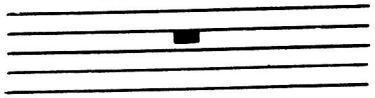
on this farm he had some ducks Ee-eye, Ee-eye, oh! Quack,Quack,here Quack,Quack,there

Ev - 'ry - where a Quack,Quack,Quack, Old Mac-Don-ald had a farm Ee-eye, Ee-eye, oh!

RESTS

RESTS are signs of silence. Each kind of Note has a Rest Sign of equal value.

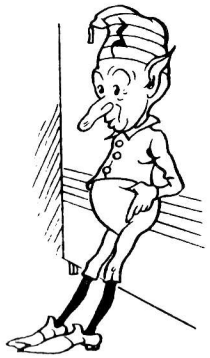
SEMIBREVE



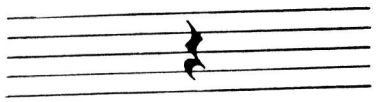
A whole bar's rest

MINIM

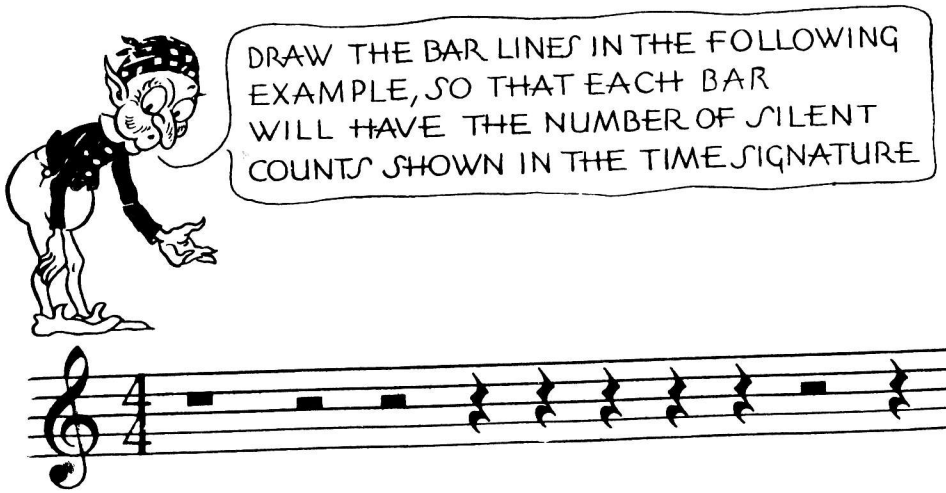
Gets 2 counts



CROTCHET

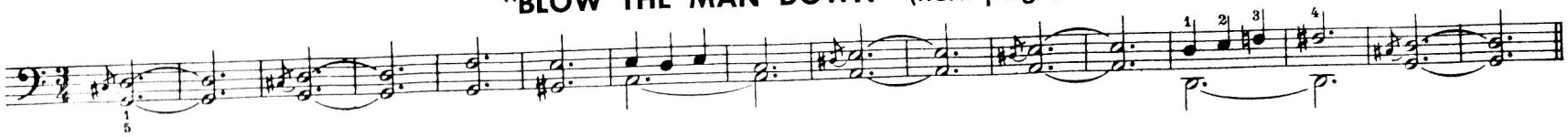


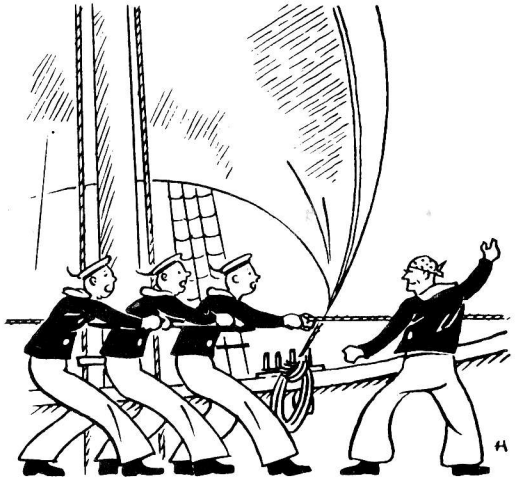
Gets 1 count



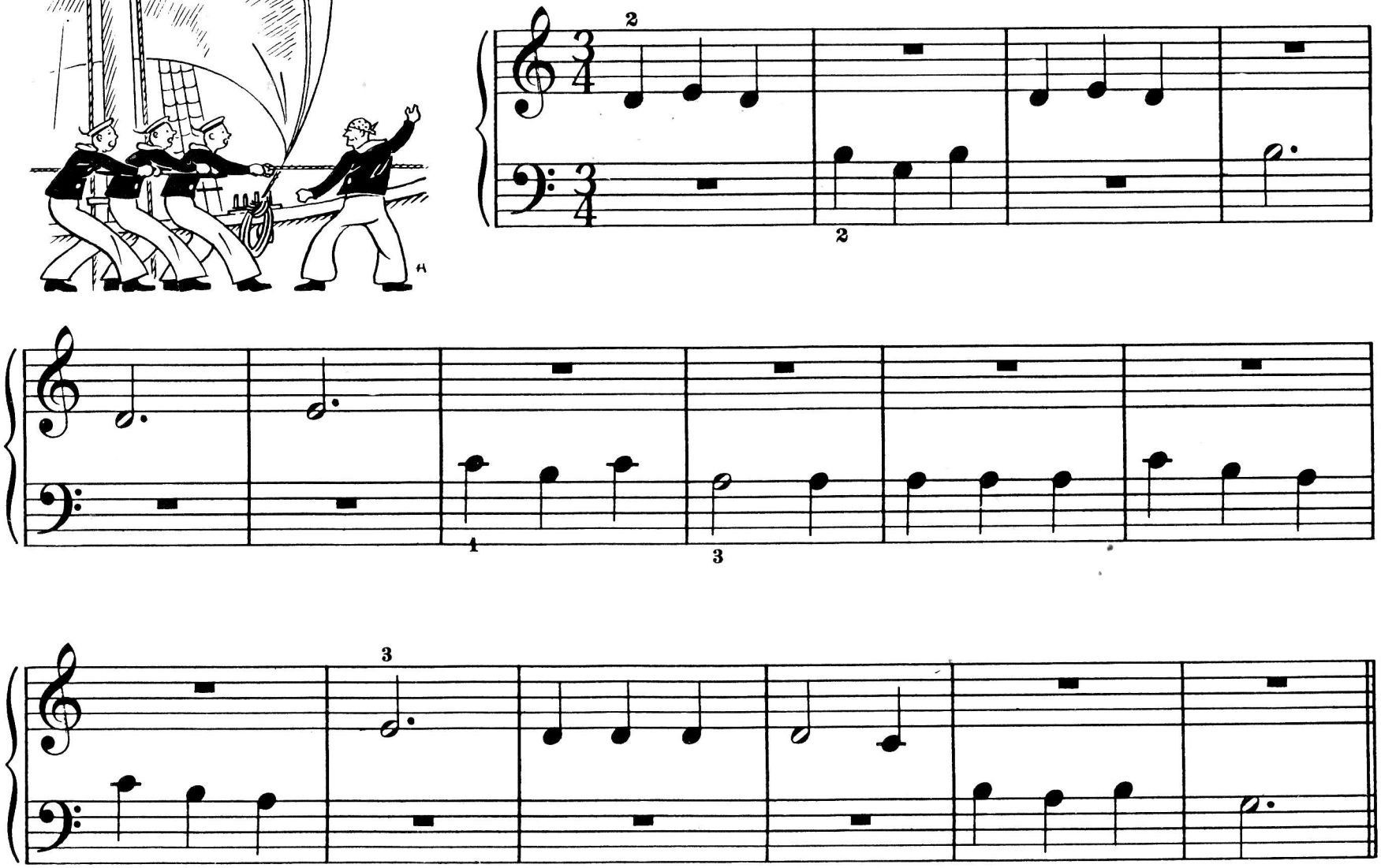
Accompaniment to

"BLOW THE MAN DOWN" (next page)



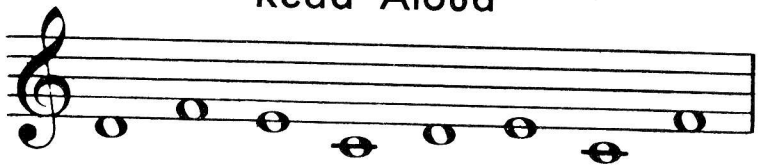


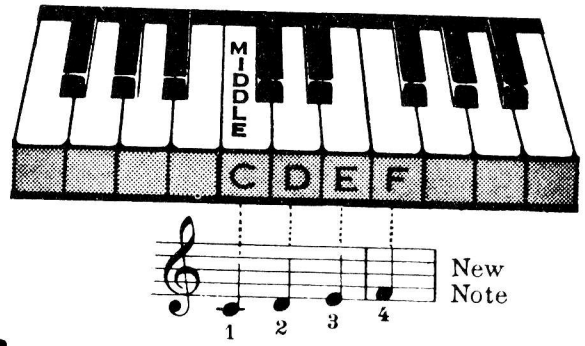
Blow the Man Down



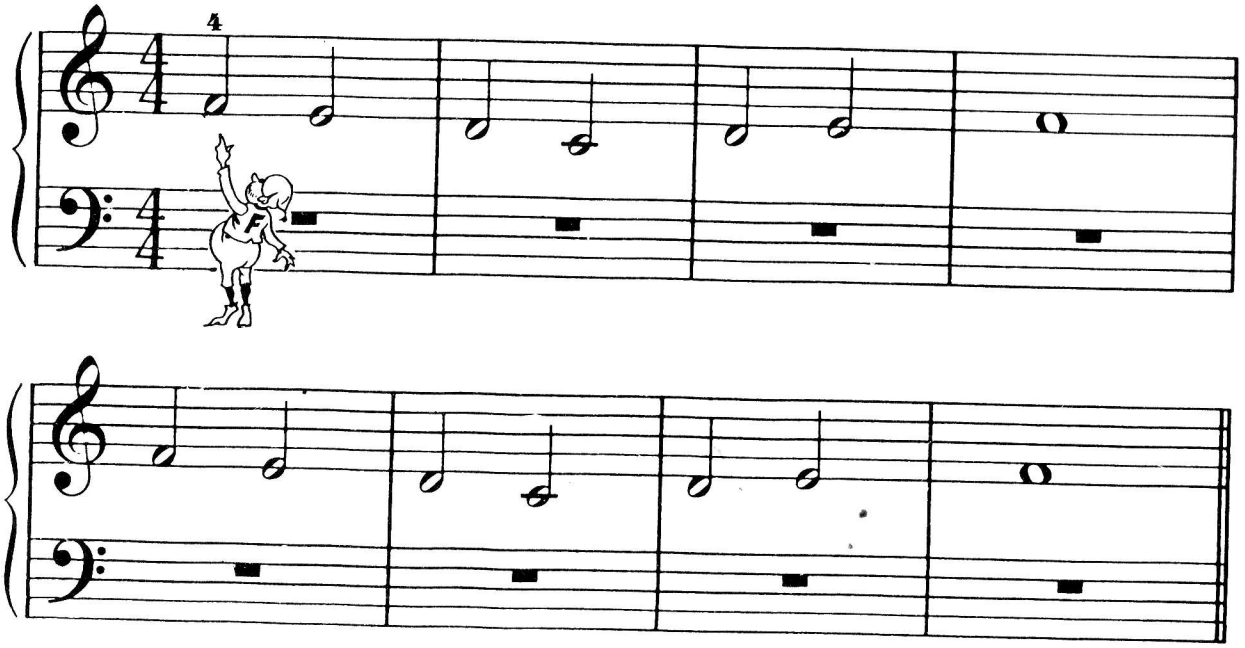
See Accompaniment on opposite page.

Read Aloud

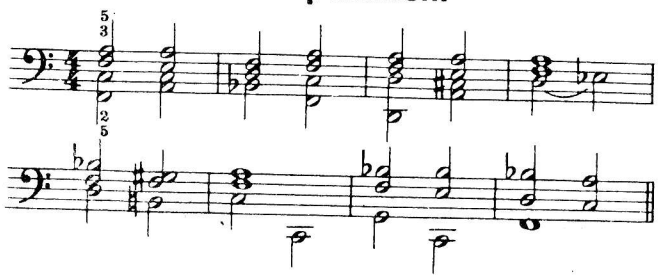




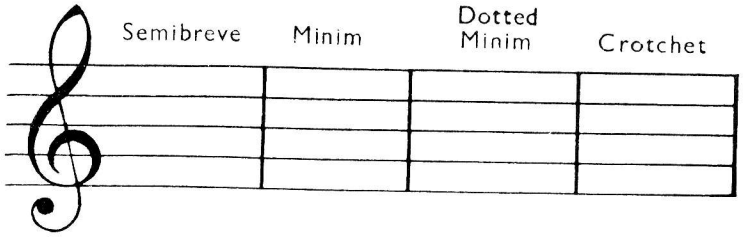
The Church Organ



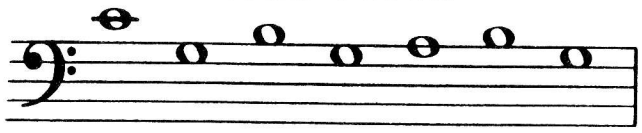
Accompaniment



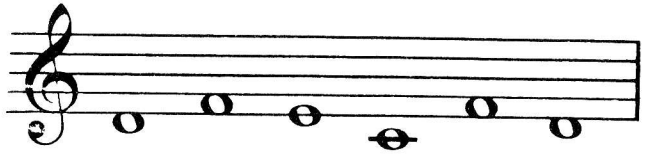
Write the new note (F) below.



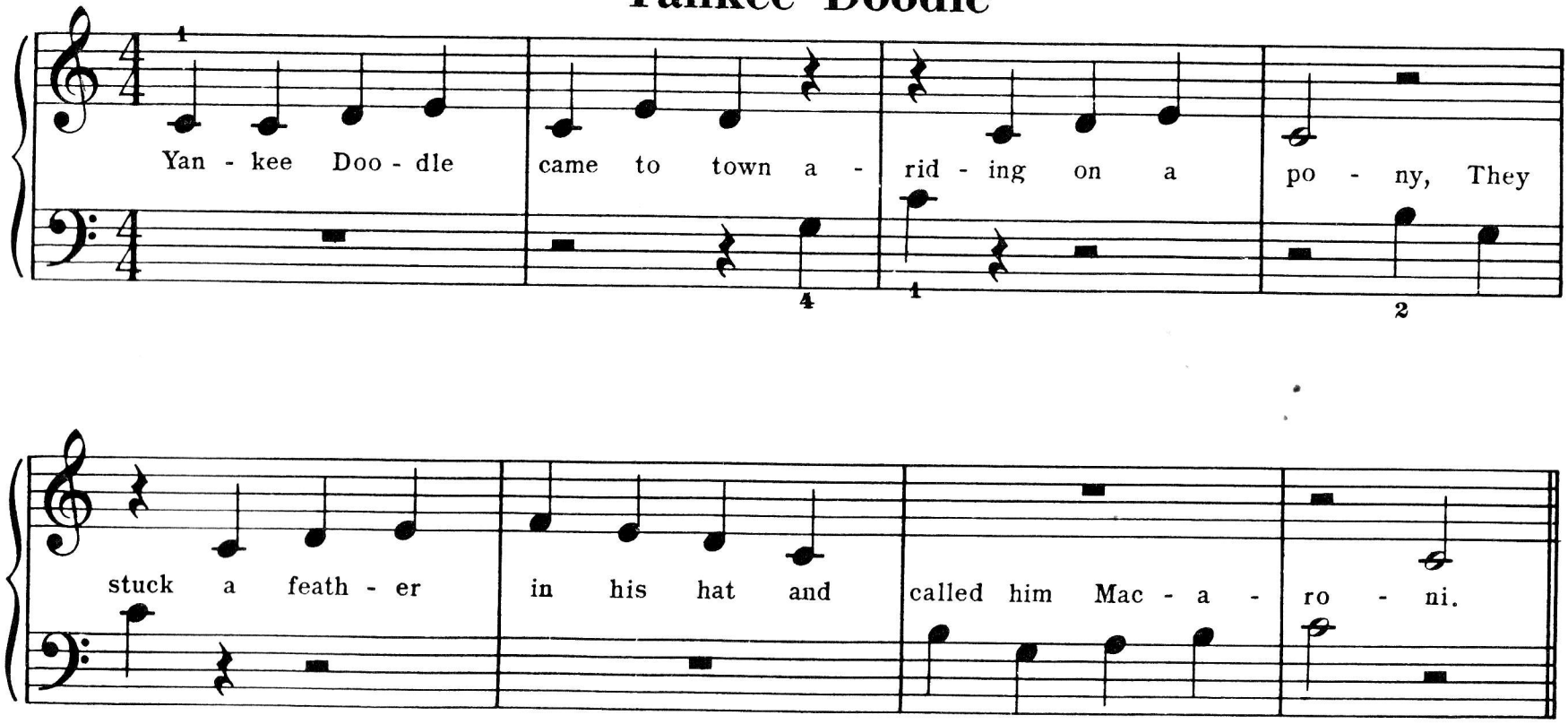
Read Aloud



Read Aloud



Yankee Doodle



Carry Me Back to Old Virginny

James A. Bland

Car - ry me back to old Vir - gin - ny,

There's where the cot - ton and the corn and 'ta - toes grow, There's where the birds war - ble

sweet in the spring-time, There's where the old dar - key's heart am longed to go.

Accompaniment

THE TIE

When two notes are tied together, the second note is not struck but held for its full value.

The Old Cotton Picker

Tie

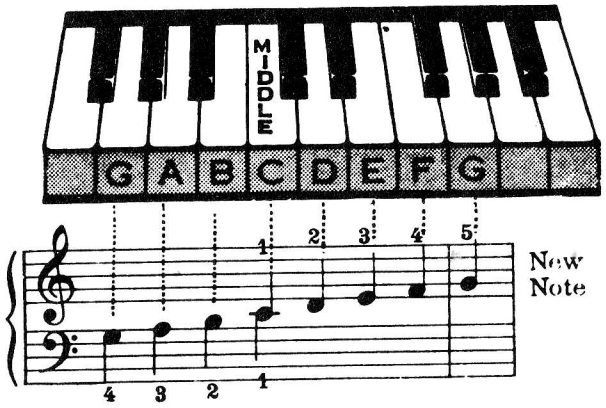
Pick - in' cot-ton, I've not for - got-ten, The hours I've spent in the sun.

Bend - in' o - ver, you're not in clo - ver, The work is no - bod - y's fun.

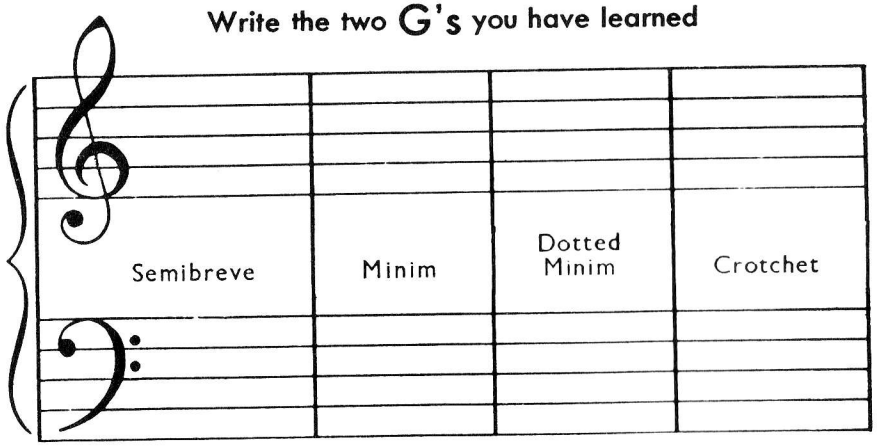
Accompaniment

R. H.

L. H.

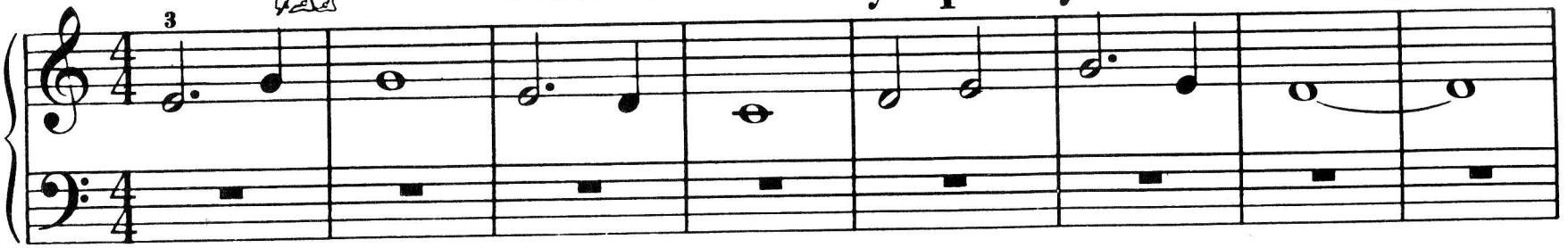


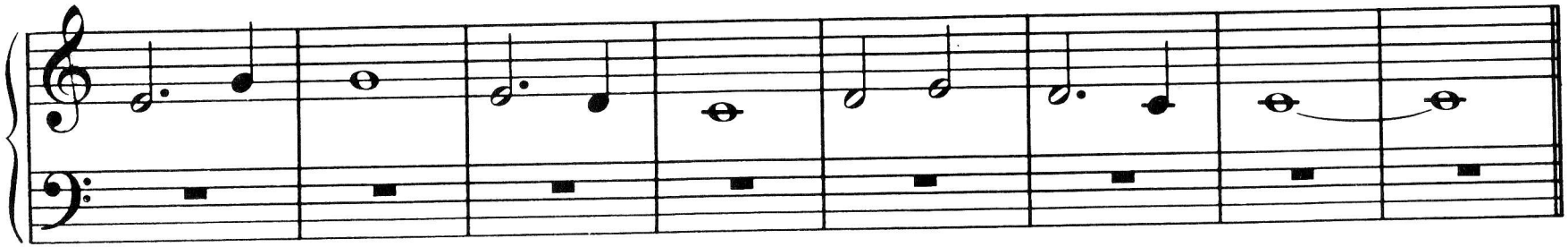
Write the two G's you have learned



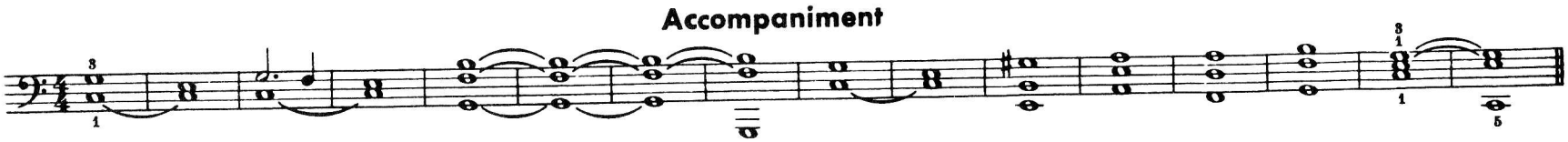
Theme from
"New World" Symphony

Anton Dvořák

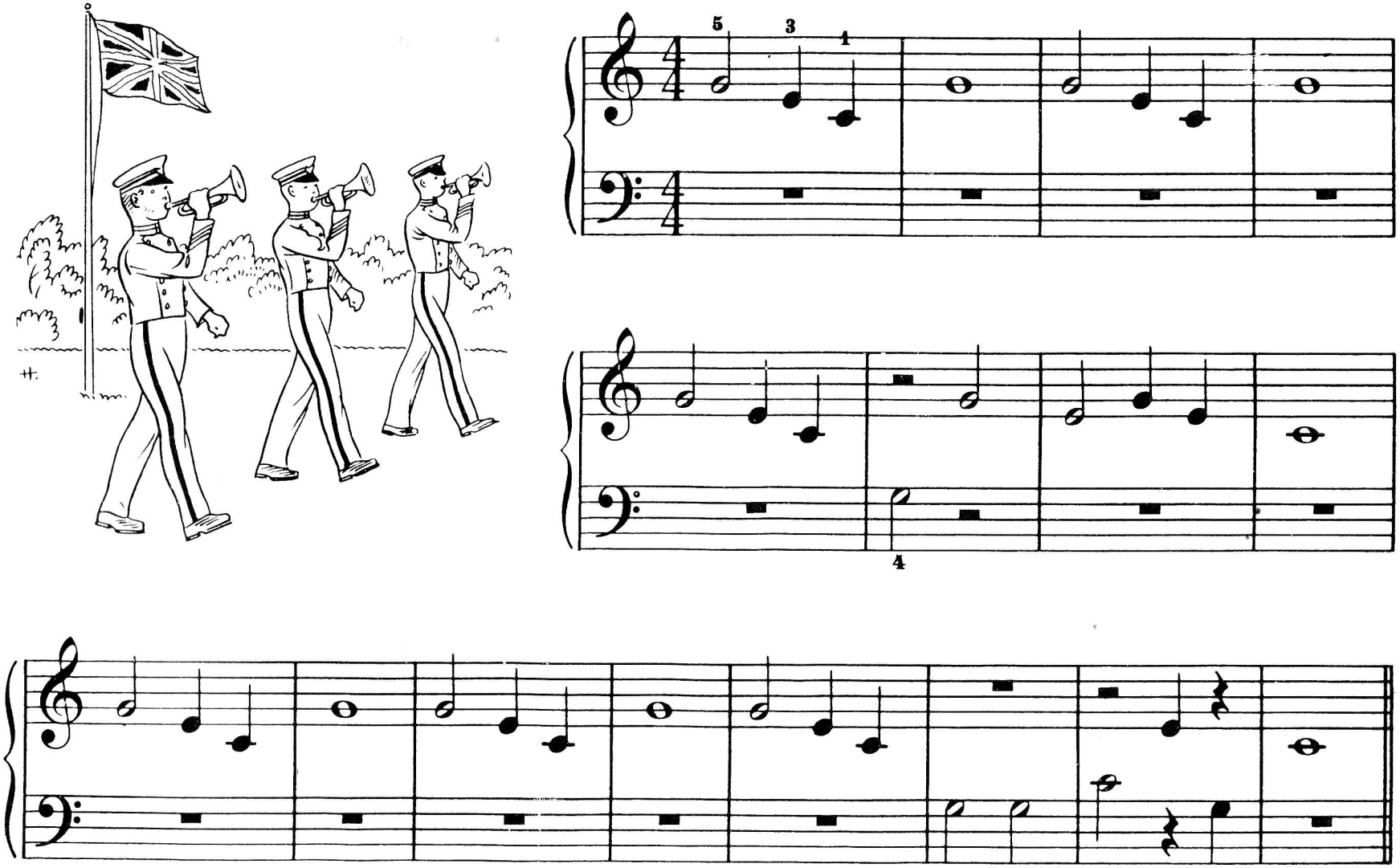




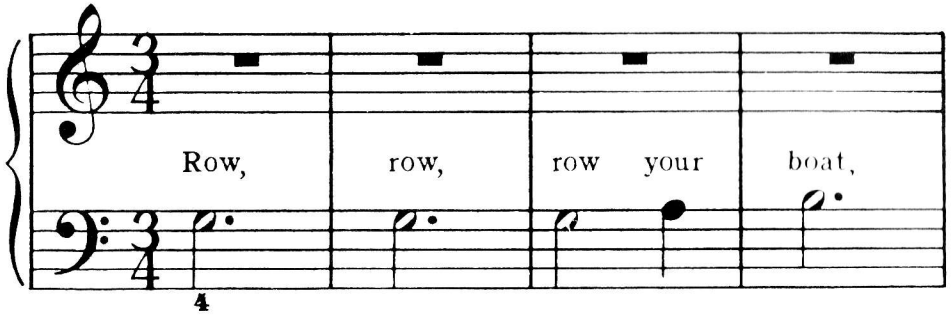
Accompaniment

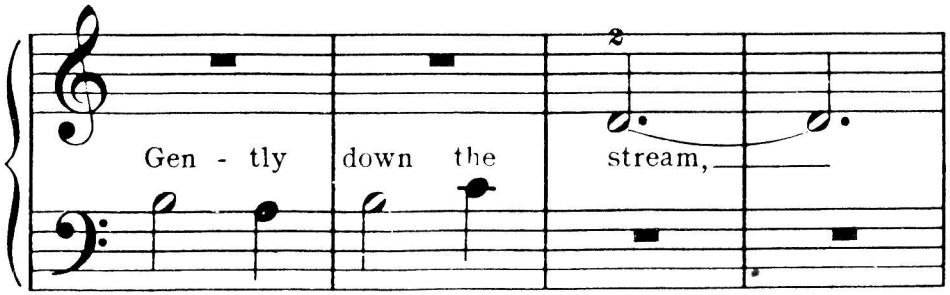


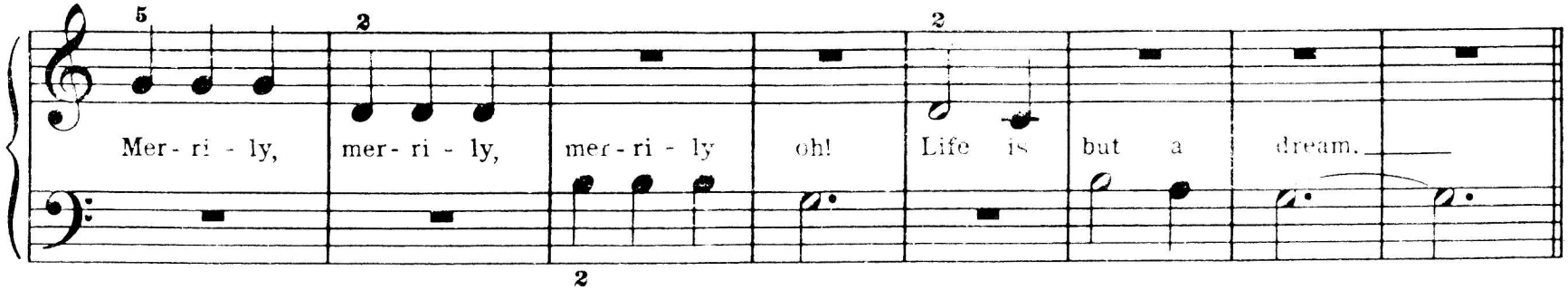
Bugles!



Row, Row


Row, row, row your boat,
4

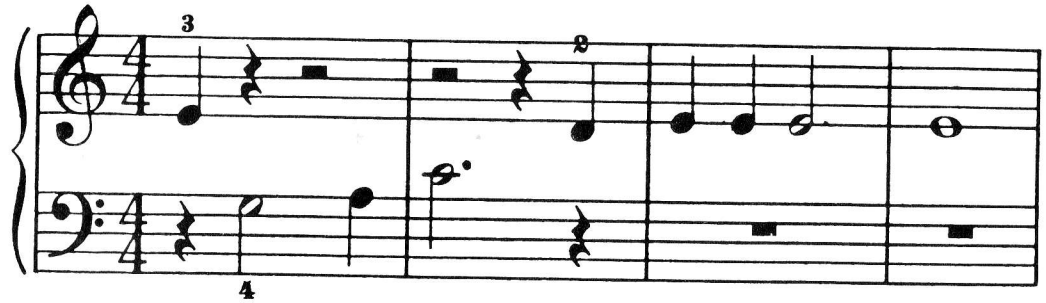

Gen - tly down the stream,
2

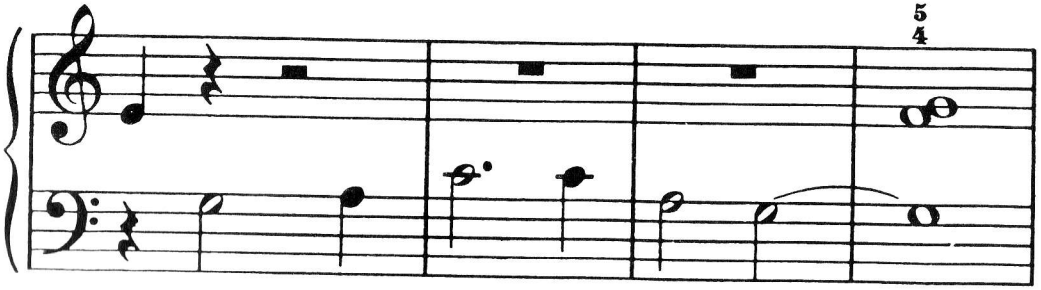

5
2
2
Mer - ri - ly, mer - ri - ly, mer - ri - ly oh! Life is but a dream.
2

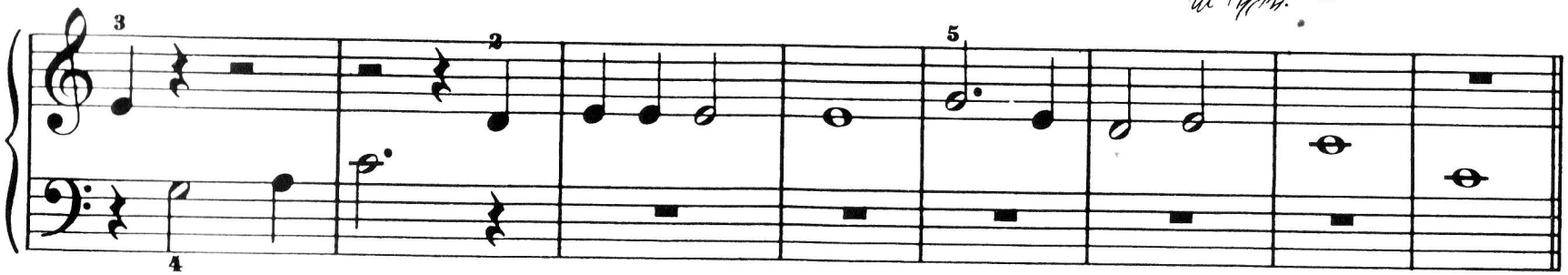
Lodwy Pieces.

Nobody Knows the Trouble I've Seen

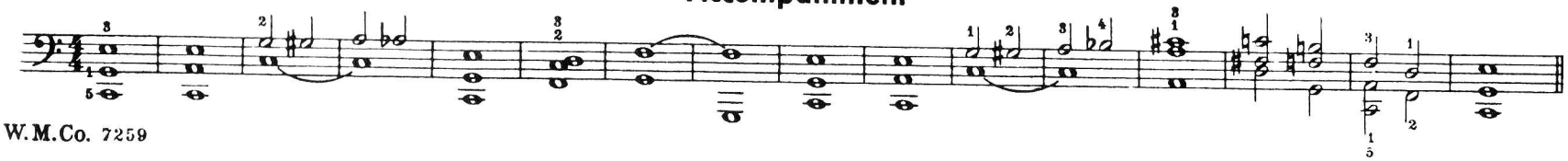
Spiritual

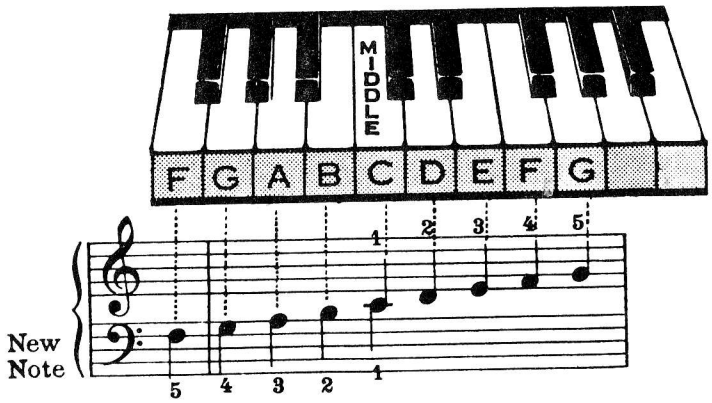




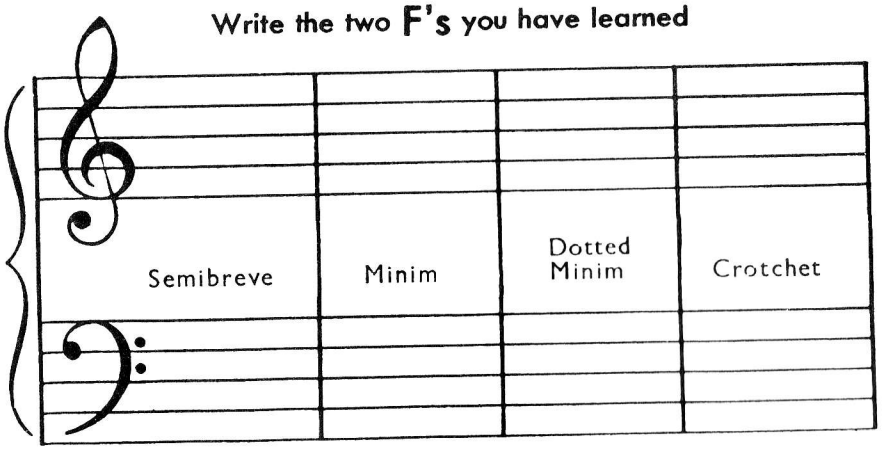


Accompaniment

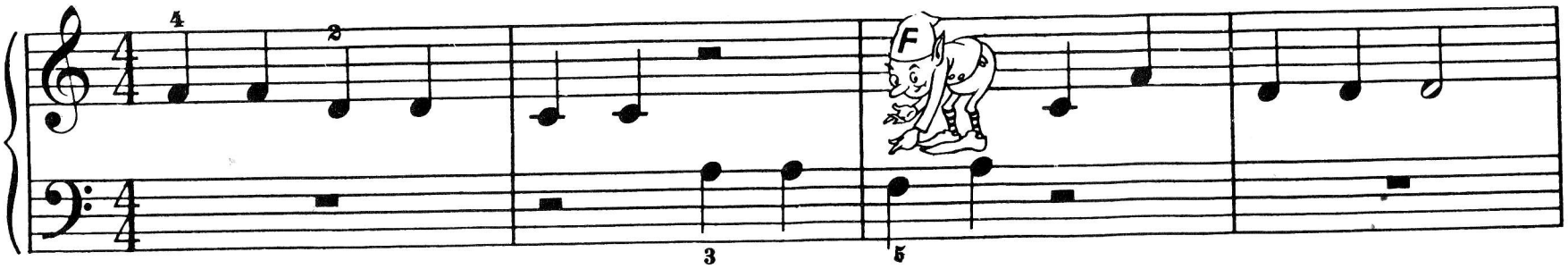


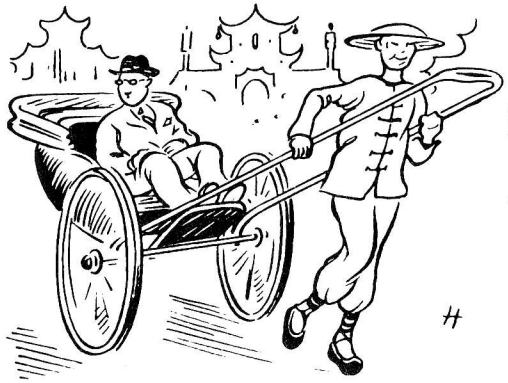


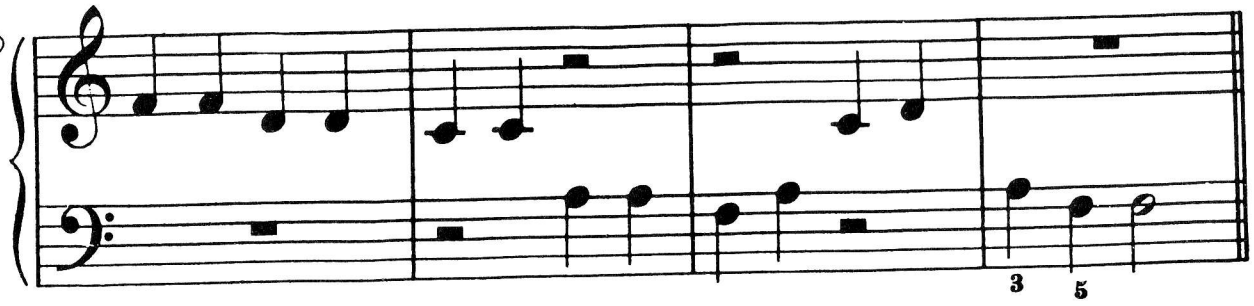
Write the two **F's** you have learned



In a Rickshaw

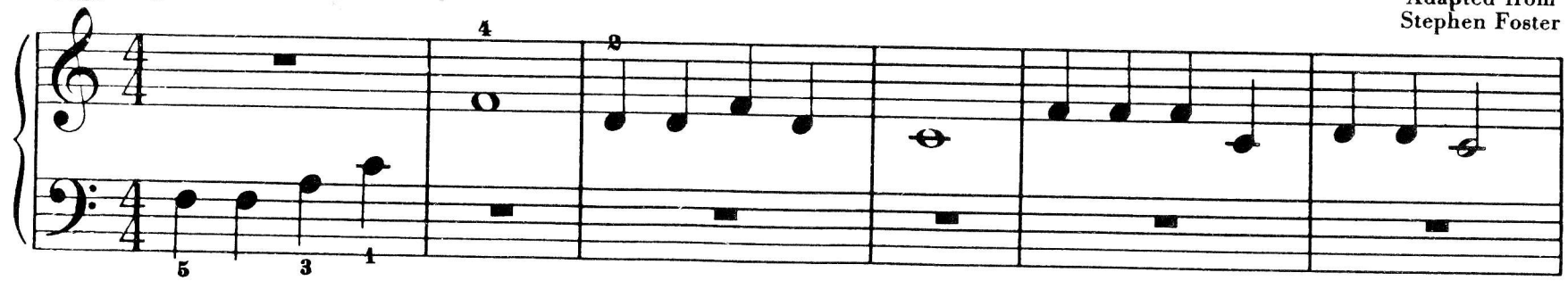


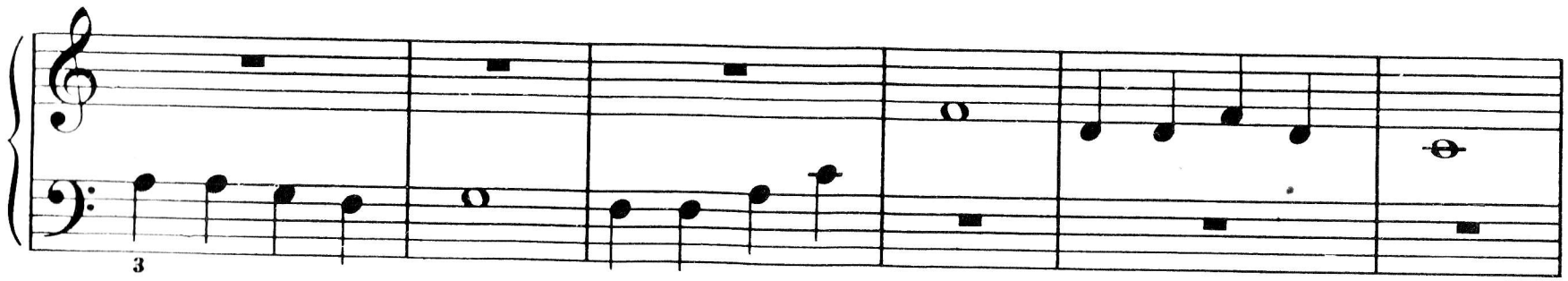


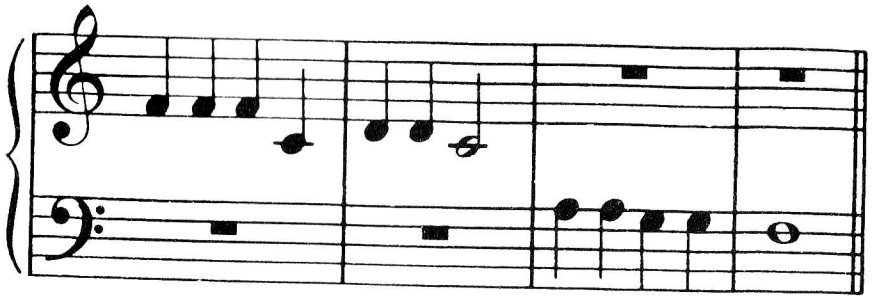


The Banjo Picker

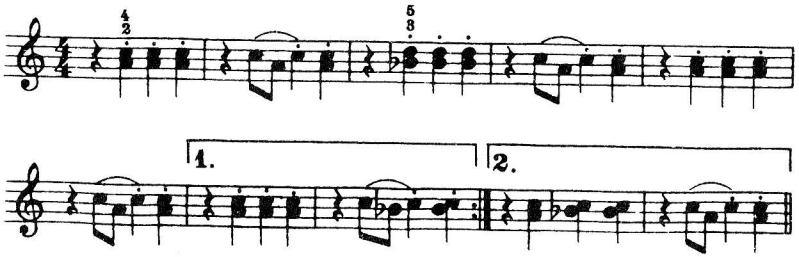
Adapted from
Stephen Foster



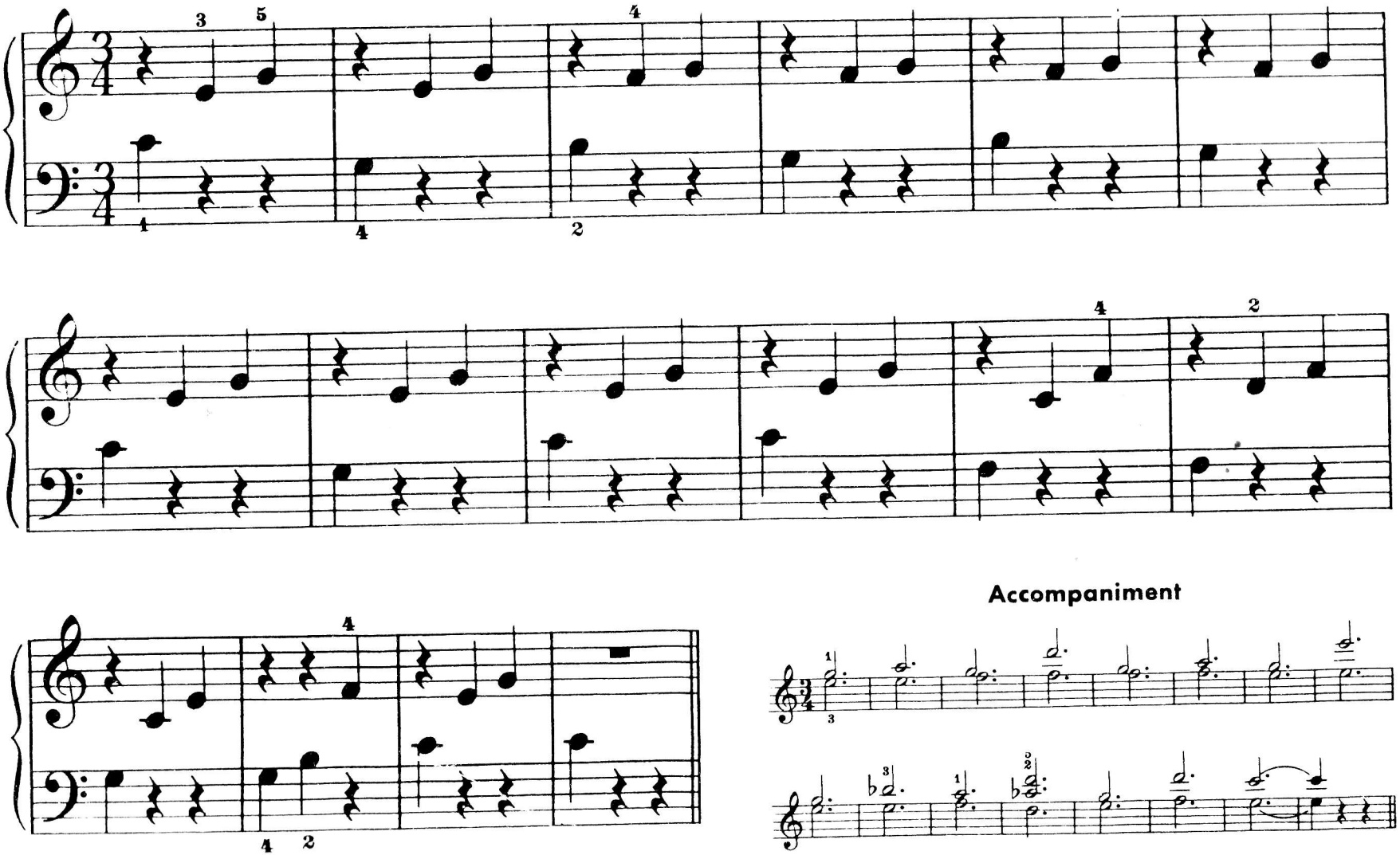


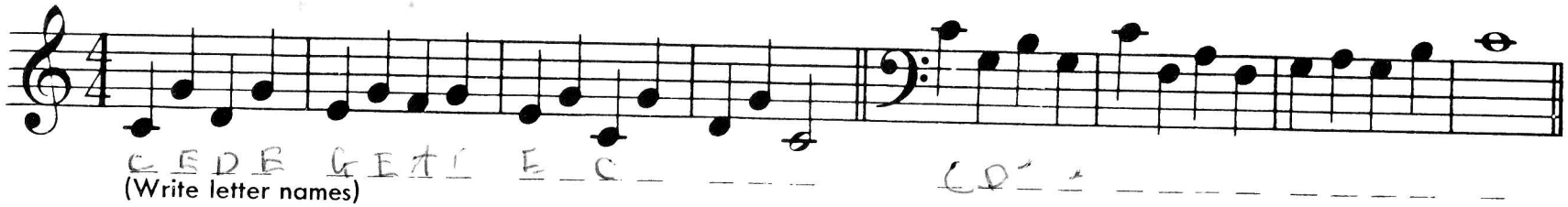


Accompaniment



Princess Waltz

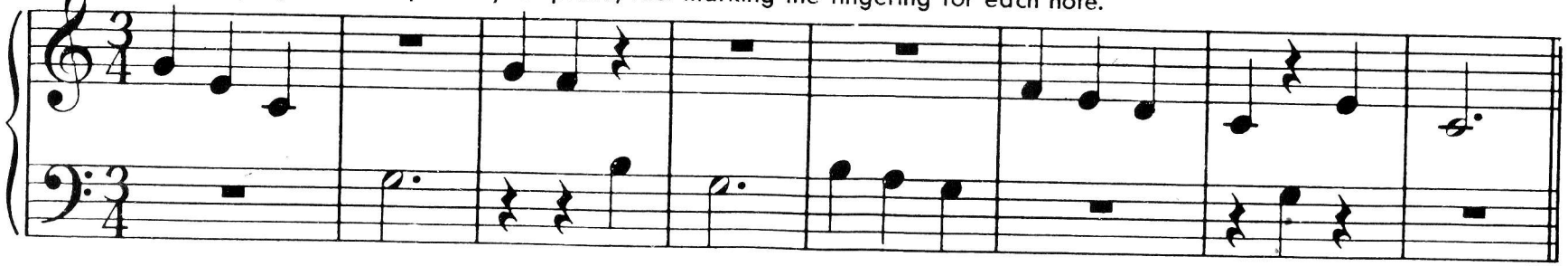




(Write letter names)

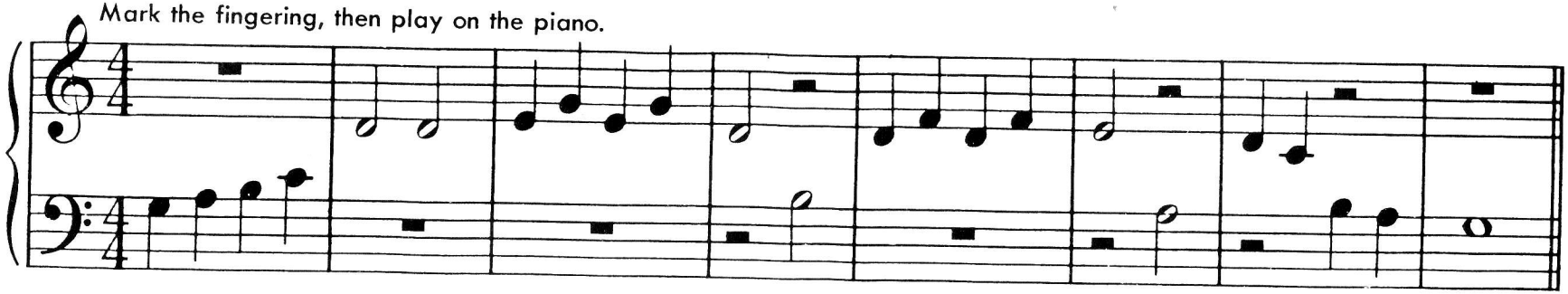
Clap the time (one clap to each count) while reciting the letter-names of the notes.

Afterwards, play the example on your piano, first marking the fingering for each note.



Clap the time and recite the notes as above.

Mark the fingering, then play on the piano.



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10/85

Certificate of Merit

This certifies that

Andrew Kersh

has successfully completed

PART ONE

OF

John Thompson's
EASIEST PIANO COURSE

and is eligible for promotion to

PART TWO

Teacher

Date 2.10.90

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